ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS

OF

SANTILLANE.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

By the Author of RODERICK RANDOM.

Adorned with Thirty-three CUTS, neatly engraved.

In FOUR VOLUMES.

The SECOND EDITION.

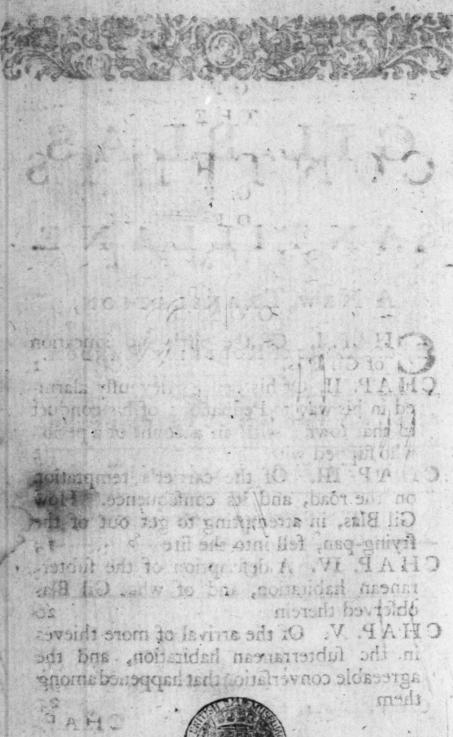
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DECLARATION.

S there are some people who cannot read without making applications of the vicious and ludicrous characters they meet with in works of this kind, I declare to these mischievous readers, that they will be to blame, if they apply any of the pictures drawn in this book. I publickly own that my purpose is to represent life as we find it: but God forbid that I should undertake to delineate any man in particular! Let no reader, therefore, assume to himself that which as properly belongs to others, left, as Phædrus observes, he make an unlucky discovery of his own character. Stulte nudabit animi conscientiam. There are physicians in Castile, as well as in France, whose practice consists in evacuating their patients a little too much; and the fame vices and peculiarities of dispofition are to be feen every where. I confels_ fess, that I have not always exactly observed the manners of the Spaniards; and those who are acquainted with the disorderly lives of the players at Madrid may reproach me with having described their irregularities with too much tenderness: but I thought it was necessary to soften them a little, that they might be the more conformable to the manners of our own country.

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READER

Entle reader, before thou hearest the history of my life, give me leave to enter-

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tain thee with a short story.

Two scholars, in their way from Pennasiel to Salamanca, being thirsty and fatigued, fat down by a spring they met with on the road. There, while they rested themselves, after having quenched their thirst, they perceived by accident, upon a stone that was even with the furface of the earth, some letters, already half effaced by time, and the feet of flocks that came to water at the fountain: having washed it, they read these words in the Castilian tongue; Aqui est à encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias, "Here is interred the foul of the Licentiate Peter Garcias." The younger of the two fludents, being a pert coxcomb, no fooner read this inscription, than he cried with a loud laugh, " A good joke i' faith; Here is interred the foul—a foul interred! - Who the devil could be the author of fuch a wife epitaph!" So faying, he got up

up and went away; while his companion, who was bleffed with a greater share of penetration, faid to himself, " There is certainly fome mystery in this affair: I'll stay in order to unriddle it." Accordingly, his comrade was no fooner out of fight, than he began to dig with his knife all around the stone; and fucceeded fo well, that he got it up, and found beneath it a leathern purse, containing an hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following sentence in Latin, "Whosoever thou art who hast wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit my money, and make a better use of it than I have done." The scholar, rejoiced at his good fortune, placed the stone in its for-mer situation, and walked home to Salamanca with the foul of the licentiate.

Of what complection foever thou mayeft be, friendly reader, thou wilt certainly refemble one of those two scholars: for if thou perusest my adventures, without perceiving the moral instructions they contain, thou wilt reap no harvest from thy labour: but if thou readest with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, profit

mingled with pleafure.



THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS of Santillane.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

Of the birth and education of Gil Blas.

having carried arms many years for the service of the Spanish monarchy, retired to the town in which he was born, where he chose a wife among the second-rate citizens, who, tho she was no chicken, brought me into the world ten months after her marriage.—They afterwards Vol. I.

removed to Oviedo, where my mother became a waiting-woman, and my father Squire* to a lady: and as they had nothing but their wages to depend upon, I should have run the hazard of being very peorly educated, had it not been my good fortune to have a canon for my uncle, whose name was Gil Peres: he was my mother's eldest brother as well as my god-father, a little man, three feet and an half high, excessive fat, with his head sunk between his shoulders; otherwise an honest priest, whose chief care was to live well; that is, to make good chear; and his living, which was no lean one, furnished him with the means.

He carried me home to his house while an infant, taking charge of my education; and I appeared so sprightly, that he resolved to cultivate my genius. With this view he bought for me an horn-book, and undertook (himself) to learn me to read; a task no less useful to him than to me: for, in teaching me my letters, he had recourse to his reading, which he had always neglected too much and, by dint of application, enabled himself to read his breviary without hesitation; a qualification he had never been possessed of before,—He had all the inclination in the world

^{*} Squire or gentleman usher, in Spanish Escudero, is a person that waits on a lady. Formerly, decayed Gentlemen were entertained by the nobility, for this purpose; they took their appellation from those eminent squires whose office was to carry the mield (in Spain, called Escudo) of their master.

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to instruct me in the Latin tongue also, because it would have been so much money saved to him: but, alas, poor Gil Peres! he had never in his life understood the rudiments of that language, and was perhaps (but this I do not vouch for certainty) the most illiterate canon of the whole chapter.—I have been told, indeed, that he had not obtained his benefice by his erudition; but owed it entirely to the gratitude of some pious nuns, for whom he had acted the part of a a zealous commissioner, and by whose influence the order of priesthood had been conferred upon him without examination.

He was therefore obliged to subject me to the birch of a school-master, and accordingly sent me to the house of doctor Godinez, who was reckon'd the most expert flogger in Oviedo. I improved fo well under his instructions, that in five or fix years I understood a little Greek, was a pretty good Latin scholar; and applying myself also to logick, began to argue apace: I was fo much in love with dispute, that I stopt passengers, known or unknown, and proposed arguments to them; and sometimes meeting with Hibernian geniuses, who were very glad of the occasion, it was a good jest to see us dispute: by our extravagant gestures, grimace, contorfions, our eyes full of fury, and our mouths full of foam, one would have taken us for bedlamites rather than Philoso-

By these means, however, I acquired the reputation of a great scholar in town; a circumstance that pleased my uncle extremely, as he foresaw that I should not be much longer an expence to him .-- "Harkee, Gil Blas, (faid " he to me one day) thou art no longer a " child and it is high time for a brifk lad of " seventeen, like thee, to push thy fortune in " the world: I am determined to fend thee to " Salamanca, where, with fuch genius and " learning, thou can'ft not fail of obtaining " fome good post: thou shalt have some du-" cats in thy pocket to bear thy expences on " the road; and I will give thee my own " mule, which thou may'ft fell at Salamanca " for ten or twelve piftoles, and live upon " the money until thou shalt be settled to thy " fatisfaction."

He could not have proposed any thing more agreeable to me; for I passionately longed to fee the world: nevertheless I had discretion enough to conceal my joy; and when the time of my departure arrived, affecting the most lively forrow at leaving an uncle, to whom I owed so many obligations, the honest man was melted, and gave me more money than he would have done, could he have feen to the bottom of my heart .-- Before I fet out I went to take leave of my father and mother, who enriched me with advice, exhorted me to pray to God for my uncle, to live inoffensively, to eschew evil, and by all means to refrain from stealing .--- After they had held

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forth a good while, they made me a present of their blessing, which was all I expected from them; and I, mounting my mule, bad adieu to Oviedo.

CHAP, II.

Of his being grievously alarmed in his way to Pennastor: Of his conduct in that town; with an account of a person who supp'd with him.

THOLD me then in the open field, clear of Oviedo, on the road to Pennaflor, master of my own conduct, of a forry mule, and forty good ducats, exclusive of fome royals which I had stolen from my muchhonoured uncle .-- The first thing I did was to let my beaft go at discretion, that is, very gently; and throwing the bridle on her neck, I emptied my purse into my hat, and amused myself in counting my money: my joy was excessive; and as I had never seen so much cash before, I handled and gazed at it with infatiable delight .--- I had reckoned it, perhaps, twenty times over, when, all of a fudden, my mule raising her head and pricking up her ears, stopt in the middle of the highway. Imagining the was frighted at fomething, I looked about to fee what was the matter, and perceived upon the ground an old hat, turned up, with a rosary of great beads in it; at the same time heard a lamentable voice pronounce these words, " Mr. tra-B 3

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" veller, for God's fake, have pity on a poor " maimed foldier; drop, if you please, a few " bits into the hat, and you shall be rewarded " in heaven." --- I turned my eyes immediately on the fide from whence the voice iffued, and faw, at the root of a bush, about twenty or thirty paces from me, a kind of foldier, who, upon two cross sticks, supported the barrel of a carbine, in my apprehension longer than a pike, with which he feemed to take aim at me: at this apparition, which made me quake for the church's money, I stopt short, and, poeketing my ducats in a great hurry, took out some rials, approaching the hat, that was exposed for the reception of extorted charity, and dropt them into it, one after another, that the beggar might fee how nobly I used him .---He was fatisfied with my bounty, and gave me a benediction for every kick that I bestowed on the fides of my mule, in order to get out of his reach; but the plaguy beaft, regardless of my impatience, moved not a step the faster, having loft the power of galloping, by a long habit of carrying my uncle at his own leifure.

I did not look upon this adventure as a very favourable omen for my journey; I confidered that I might meet with something still worse, before I should arrive at Salamanca; and could not help blaming my uncle's imprudence, for having neglected to put me under the direction of a carrier. This, to be sure, was what he ought to have done; but he imagined

gined that, by giving me his mule, my journey would be the less expensive; and he had more regard to that consideration, than to the dangers I might be exposed to on the road.—In order therefore to repair his mismanagement, I determined (as soon as I should arrive at Pennastor) to sell the mule, and take the opportunity of a carrier for Astorga, from whence I could transport myself to Salamanca by the same convenience; for although I had never been out of Oviedo, I was not ignorant of the names of the towns through which I must pass, having informed myself of these things before I set out.

I arrived in fafety at Pennaflor, and, halting at the gate of an inn that made a tolerable appearance, I no fooner alighted than the landlord came out, and received me with great civility; he untied my Portmanteau with his own hands, and, throwing it on his shoulder, conducted me into a room, while one of his fervants led my mule into the stable.--This inn-keeper, the greatest talker of the Asturies, and as ready to relate his own affairs, without being asked, as to pry into those of another, told me that his name was Andrew Corcuelo; that he had ferved many years in the king's army, in quality of a serjeant; and had quitted the service fifteen months ago, to marry a damfel of Castropol, who (tho' she was a little fwarthy) knew very well how to turn the penny. He faid a thousand other things, which I could have dispensed with the B 4

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hearing of; but after having made me his confidant, he thought he had a right to exact the same condescension from me; and accordingly asked whence I came, whither I was going, and what I was .-- I was obliged to aniwer, article by article, because he accompanied every question with a profound bow, and begged me to excuse his curiofity with fuch a respectful air, that I could not refuse to fatisfy him in every particular.—This engaged me in a long conversation with him, and gave me occasion to mention my defign, and the reasons I had for disposing of my mule, that I might take the opportunity of a carrier.-He approved of my intention, tho' not in a very fuccinct manner; for he reprefented all the troublesome accidents that might befal me on the road, he recounted many difmal stories of travellers, and I was afraid he would never have done: he concluded at length, however, telling me, that if I had a mind to fell my mule, he was acquainted with a very honest jocky who would buy her. I affured him he would oblige me in fending for him; upon which he went in quest of him immediately with great eagerness.—It was not long before he returned with his man, whom he introduced to me as a person of exceeding honesty, and we went into the yard all together, where my mule was produced, and pass'd and repass'd before the jocky, who examin'd her from head to foot, and did not fail to speak very disadvantageously of her.

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I own there was not much to be faid in her praise; but, however, had it been the pope's mule, he would have found fome defects in her. He affured me, that she had all the faults a mule could have; and, to convince me of his veracity, appealed to the landlord, who, doubtless, had his reasons for supporting his friend's affertions .- "Well, (faid this "dealer, with an air of indifference) how "much money do you expect for this "wretched animal?" After the eulogium he had bestowed on her, and the attestation of fignior Corcuelo, whom I believed to be a man of honesty and understanding, I would have given my mule for nothing; and therefore told him I would rely on his integrity; biding him appraise the beaft in his own conscience, and I would stand to the valuation. Upon this he affumed the man of honour, and replied, that in engaging his confcience I took him on the weak fide: in good footh, that did not feem to be his ftrong fide; for instead of valuing her at ten or twelve pistoles, as my uncle had done, he fixed the price at three ducats, which I accepted with as much joy as if I had made an excellent bargain.

After having so advantageously disposed of my mule, the landlord conducted me to a carrier, who was to set out the next day for Astorga.—This muleteer let me know, that he would depart before day-break, and promised to wake me in time, after we had agreed upon the price, as well for the hire of

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a mule

a mule as for my board on the road; and when every thing was fettled between us, I returned to the inn with Corcuelo, who, by the way, began to recount the carrier's hiftory; he told me every circumstance of his character in town, and, in short, was going to stupify me again with his intolerable loquacity; when, luckily for me, a man of a pretty good appearance prevented my misfortune, by accosting him with great civility.

—I left them together, and went on, without suspecting that I had the least concern in their conversation.

When I arrived at the inn I called for fupper, and, it being a meagre day, was fain to put up with eggs; which while they got ready, I made up to my landlady, whom I had not seen before: she appeared handsome enough, and withall so sprightly and gay, that I should have concluded (even if her husband had not told me fo) that her house was pretty well frequented.—When the amlet I had bespoke was ready, I fat down to table by myself; and had not yet fwallowed the first morfel when the landlord came in, followed by the man who had stopt him in the street. This cavalier, who wore a long fword, and feemed to be about thirty years of age, advanced towards me with an eager air, faying, "Mr. " student, I am informed that you are that "fignior Gil Blas of Santillane, who is the " link of philosophy, and ornament of Ovie-" do! Is it possible that you are that mirror

"of learning, that sublime genius, whose reputation is so great in this country.—You know not, (continued he, addressing himself to the inn-keeper and his wife) you know not what you posses! You have a treasure in your house! Behold, in this young gentleman, the eighth wonder of the world!" Then turning to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, "Forgive (cried he) my transports! I cannot contain the

" joy that your presence creates!"

I could not answer for some time, because he locked me so close in his arms, that I was almost suffocated for want of breath; and it was not till I had disengaged my head from his embrace, that I replied, "Signior cava-"lier, I did not think my name was known "at Pennaflor." -- "How! known! (re-" fumed he in his former strain) we keep a " register of all the celebrated names within " twenty leagues of us :- You in particular " are look'd upon as a prodigy; and I don't " at all doubt, that Spain will one day be as " proud of you, as Greece was of her seven "fages." These words were followed by a fresh hug, which I was enforced to endure, tho' at the risk of strangulation. With the little experience I had, I ought not to have been the dupe of his professions and hyperbolical compliments: I ought to have known, by his extravagant flattery, that he was one of those parasites which abound in every town, and who, when a stranger arrives, introduce

themselves to him, in order to fill their bellies at his expence: but my youth and vanity made me judge quite otherwise: my admirer appeared to me so much of a gentleman, that I invited him to take a share of my supper. "Ah! with all my soul, (cried he) I am too "much obliged to my kind stars for having "thrown me in the way of the illustrious Gil Blas, not to enjoy my good fortune as long as I can! I have no great appetite, (pursued he) but I will sit down to bear you company, and eat a mouthful, purely out

" of complaifance."

So faying, my panegyrift took his place right over-against me, and, a cover being laid for him, attacked the amlet as voraciously as if he had fasted three whole days: by his complaifant beginning I forefaw that our dish would not last long, and therefore ordered a fecond; which they dress'd with such difpatch, that it was ferved just as we-or rather he-had made an end of the first.-He proceeded on this with the fame vigour, and found means, without losing one stroke of his teeth, to overwhelm me with praises during the whole repast, which made me very well pleased with my sweet self .- He drank in proportion to his eating; fometimes to my health, fometimes to that of my father and mother, whose happiness in having such a son as me he could not enough admire.—In the mean time he plied me with wine, and infifted upon my doing him justice, while I toasted health for

for health; a circumstance which, together with his intoxicating flattery, put me into such good humour, that seeing our second amlet half devoured, I asked the landlord if he had no sish in the house. Signior Corcuelo, who, in all likelihood, had a fellow-seeling with the parasite, replied, "I have a delicate trout, "but those who eat it must pay for the sauce: "—'tis a bit too dainty for your palate, I doubt."—" What do you call too dainty? "(said the sycophant, raising his voice) you're a wiseacre, indeed! know that there is no"thing in this house too good for signior Gil" Blas de Santillane, who deserves to be en-

" tertained like a prince."

I was pleased at his laying hold of the landlord's last words, in which he prevented me, who finding myself offended, faid, with an air of disdain, " Produce this trout of yours, " gaffer Corcuelo, and give yourself no trouble " about the consequence."-This was what the inn-keeper wanted: he got it ready, and served it up in a trice. At fight of this new dish, I could perceive the parasite's eyes sparkle with joy; and he renewed that complaisance -I mean for the fish, -which he had already fhewn for the eggs. At last, however, he was obliged to give out, for fear of accident, being cramm'd to the very throat: having therefore eaten and drank his bellyful, he thought proper to conclude the farce by rifing from table, and accosting me in these words, " Signior Gil Blas, I am too well fatisfied 66 with

" with your good cheer to leave you, with-" out offering an important advice, which " you feem to have great occasion for : hence "forth beware of praise, and be upon your " guard against every body you do not know. "You may meet with other people inclined " to divert themselves with your credulity, " and perhaps to push things still farther; " but don't be duped again, nor believe your-" felf (tho' they should swear it) the eighth "wonder of the world." - So faying, he " laughed in my face and stalked away. I was as much affected by this bite as I have fince been by misfortunes of far greater confequence.- I could not forgive myself for having been fo grosly imposed upon; or rather, I was shock'd to find my pride so humbled: "How! (faid I to myfelf) has the traitor "then made a jest of me? His design in accosting my land-lord in the street was " only to pump him; or perhaps they un-" derstand one another! Ah! simple Gil Blas! "Go hang thyself for shame, for having given " fuch rascals an opportunity of turning thee " into ridicule! I suppose they'll trump up a "fine ftory of this affair, which will reach "Oviedo, and doubtless do thee a great deal " of honour; and make thy parents repent " their having thrown away so much good " counsel on an ass: instead of exhorting me " not to wrong any body, they ought to have " cautioned me against the knavery of the " world!" Chagrin'd with these mortifying

reflections, and inflamed with refentment, I locked myself in my chamber, and went to bed, where however I did not sleep; for, before I could close my eyes, the carrier came to let me know that he was ready to set out, and only waited for me: I got up instantly, and while I put on my cloaths Corcuelo brought me a bill, in which, I assure you, the trout was not forgotten: and I was not only obliged to gratify his exorbitance, but I had also the mortification to perceive, while I counted the money, that the sarcastic knave remembered my adventure. After having paid sauce for a supper, which I had so ill digested, I went to the muleteer with my bags, wishing the parasite, the inn-keeper, and his inn at the devil.

CHAP. III.

Of the carrier's temptation on the road, and its consequence—How Gil Blas, in attempting to get cut of the frying-pan, fell into the fire.

I Was not the only person who travelled with the carrier, there being in company two children belonging to a gentleman at Pennaflor, a little stroling ballad-singer of Mondonedo, and a young tradesman of Astorga, who was bringing home a girl whom he had married at Verco. We became acquainted with one another presently, and every one, in a very short time, told whence he came, and whither he was going.—The new-married lady lady was fo stupid and tawny, that I had no great pleasure in looking at her; but her youth and plumpness had a different effect upon the carrier, who resolved to make an attempt upon her inclinations: He spent the whole day in projecting this noble delign, the execution of which he deferr'd until we should arrive at our last stage, which happened to be at Cacabelos. He accordingly made us alight at the first inn we came to, a house situated, rather in the country than in the town, the landlord of which he knew to be a complaifant and discreet person.-He took care to have us conducted into a remote apartment, where he allowed us to fup in tranquility; but when our meal was ended, he entered with a furious look, crying, "Blood and oons! " I am robbed of one hundred pistoles, which " I had in a leathern bag, and I must find " them immediately, otherwise I will apply " to the magistrate of the place, who is no " joker in these matters, and have you all put " to the rack, 'till fuch time as you confess " the crime and restore the money." Having pronounced these dreadful words with a very natural air, he went out, leaving us all in the utmost consternation.

As we were strangers to one another, none of us had the least suspicion of the finesse; for my own part I suspected that the poor ballad-singer had done the deed; and perhaps he had the same opinion of me. Besides, we were all raw sools, utterly ignorant of the

formalities used in such cases, and believed in good earnest, that the process would be begun by putting us all to the torture. Giving way therefore to our fear, we evacuated the room in a great hurry, fome running into the street, others flying into the garden, and every one betaking himself to his heels for fafety. Among the reft the young tradefman of Aftorga, as much scared as any of us at the thoughts of the torture, made his escape, like another Æneas, without incommoding himself with his wife.—It was then that the carrier, (as I have fince learned) more incontinent than his mules. and overjoyed to see his stratagem succeed according to his expectation, went to the bride, boafted of his own ingenuity, and endeavoured to profit by the occasion :- but this Lucrece of the Afturies, to whom the villanous aspect of her tempter lent new strength, made a vigorous refistance, and screamed most powerfully. The patrole, which happened at that instant to pass by the house, that they knew deserved their attention, went in and demanded the reason of those cries: upon which the landlord, who fat finging in the kitchen, and pretended to know nothing of the matter, was obliged to conduct the officer and his guard into the chamber of the person who made the noise. They arrived very seasonably, the chafte Afturian being quite exhaufted; and the commander (who was none of the most delicate people in the world) perceiving what was the matter, gave the amorous muleteer

teer a wooden falutation with the handle of his halbert, addressing him at the same time in terms as inconfiftent with modesty as the action that fuggefted them .- This was not all: he apprehended the criminal, and carried him before the judge, together with his accuser; who, notwithstanding her disorder, would have gone of herself to crave justice for the outrage that was committed upon her. The magiftrate having heard, and attentively confidered the cause, found the defendant guilty, caused him to be stript and scourged in his presence; and ordered that, if the husband of the plaintiff should not appear before next day, she should be escorted to Astorga by two horsemen, at the charge of the delinquent.

As for me, more terrified, perhaps, than the rest, I got into the country, and croffing I don't know how many fields and heaths, and leaping all the ditches I found in my way, I arrived at last at the side of a wood, and was just going into it, with a view of concealing myself in some thicket, when, all of a fudden, two men on horseback appeared before me, and called, "Who goes there?" As my furprize hindered me from making immediate answer, they advanced, and each clapping a pistol to my throat, commanded me to tell who I was, whence I came, my business in that forest, and, above all things, to hide nothing from them.—To these interrogations, the manner of which feemed to me equal to the rack with which the carrier had had threaten'd us, I replied, that I was a lad of Oviedo, going to Salamanca; recounted the alarm we had undergone, and confes'd, that the fear of being put to the torture had induced me to run away.—They burst out into a loud laugh at this discovery, which manifested the simplicity of my heart; and one of them said, "Take courage, friend; come along with us, and fear nothing: we will put thee in a place of safety." So saying, he made me get up behind him, and then we retreated into the wood.

Though I did not know what to make of this rencounter, I did not presage any thing bad from it; for (faid I to myself) if these people were thieves, they would have robb'd, and perhaps murder'd me, at once: they must certainly be honest gentlemen, who live hard by, and who, feeing me in a panic, have pity on my condition, and carry me home with them out of charity.—But I did not long remain in suspence; for, after several windings and turnings, which we performed in great filence, we came to the foot of a hill, where we alighted; and one of the horsemen said to me, "This is our dwelling-" place." I looked around, but could perceive neither house, hut, nor the least appearance of any habitation: nevertheless, these two men lifted up a huge wooden trap-door, covered with earth and brambles, which conceal'd the entrance of a long shelving passage under ground, into which the horses went of themthemselves, like beafts that were used to it; while the cavaliers, taking the same path, made me follow them: then lowering the cover, with cords fastened to the inside for that purpose, behold the worthy kinsman of my uncle Peres, caught like a mouse in a trap.

CHAP. IV.

A description of the subterranean habitation, and of what Gil Blas observed therein.

I Now discovered my situation, and any one I may easily believe that this discovery effectually dispelled my former fear: a terror more mighty, and better founded, took possession of my foul! I laid my account with losing my life as well as my ducats; and looking upon myself as a victim led to the altar, walked (more dead than alive) between my two conductors, who, feeling me tremble, exhorted me in vain to fear nothing.—When we had gone about 200 paces, turning and defcending all the way, we entered into a stable, lighted by two great iron lamps hanging from the arch above. Here I saw plenty of straw, and a good many casks full of provender: there was room enough for twenty horses; but at that time there were only the two that we brought along with us, which an old negro, who seemed vigorous for his years, was tying to a rack.-We went out of the stable, and by the dismal glimmer of some lamps, that feemed to enlighten the place, only

only to shew the horrors of it, came to a kitchen, where an old cook-maid was bufy in broiling fleaks, and providing for supper.-The kitchen was adorned with all necessary utenfils, and hard by there was a larder stored with all forts of provision.—The cook (for I must draw her picture) was a person somewhat turned of fixty: in her youth the hair of her head had been red as a carrot; for time had not as yet fo much bleached it, but that one might still perceive some shades of its primitive colour: she had an olive complexion, a chin pointed and prominent, with lips fallen in, a huge aquiline nose that hung over her mouth, and eyes that flamed in purple.

Well, dame Leonarda, (faid one of the "gentlemen, presenting me to this fair angel " of darkness) here's a young man we have " brought for you." Then turning to me, and observing me pale and dismayed, " Friend, " (faid he) banish thy fear; we will do thee " no harm-Having occasion for a servant to " affift our cook-maid, we met with thee, " and happy is it for thee we did: thou shalt " here fupply the place of a young fellow, " who let himself die about fifteen days ago: " he was a lad of a very delicate complexion; " but thou feemest to be more robust, and " wilt not die fo foon: indeed thou wilt never " fee the light of the fun again; but in lieu " of that, thou shalt have good chear, and " a roufing fire. Thou shalt pass thy time

" with Leonarda, who is a very gentle crea-" ture, and enjoy all thy little conveniencies. " I will shew thee, (added he) that thou hast " not got among beggars." With these words he took up a flambeau, and, biding me follow him, carried me into a cellar, where I faw an infinite number of bottles and jars well cork'd, which (he told me) were filled with excellent wine. He afterwards made me pass through divers apartments, some of which contained bales of linnen, others of filks and ftuffs: in one I perceived gold and filver, and a great quantity of plate in different cupboards .-Then I followed him into a large hall, illuminated by three branches of copper, which also gave light to the rooms that communicated with it: here he put fresh questions to me; asked my name, and reason for leaving Oviedo; and when I had fatisfied his curiofity in these particulars, "Well, Gil Blas, (said "he) fince thy defign in quitting the place " of thy nativity was to obtain some good " post, thou must certainly have been born "with a cawl upon thy head; because thou " hast fallen into our hands.—I have already " told thee, that thou shalt live here in afflu-"ence, and roll upon gold and filver: nay " more, thou shalt be safe; for such is the " contrivance of this retreat, that the officers " of the holy brotherhood may come into the " wood an hundred times without discovering "it. The entry is unknown to every living "foul, except me and my comrades: per-" haps

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haps thou wilt wonder how it could be " executed without being perceived by the " people in the neighbourhood! know then, " my lad, that this is not a work of our hands, " but was made many years ago; for after " the Moors had got possession of Grenada, " Arragon, and almost the whole of Spain, " the christians, rather than submit to the " yoke of infidels, fled and conceal'd them-" selves in this country, in Biscay, and in " the Afturies, whither the valiant Don Pela-"gio retired: fugitives, and dispersed in mountains "and woods; some lurked in caves, and " others contrived many subterranean abodes, " of which number this is one. Having af-" terwards been fo lucky as to drive their " enemies out of Spain, they returned into "the towns; and, fince that time, their re-" treats have ferved for afylums to people of " our profession. 'Tis true, indeed, the holy " brotherhood * have discovered and destroy-" ed some of them; but there are still plenty " remaining; and (thank heaven) I have " lived here in fafety near fifteen years: my " name is capt. Rolando: I am chief of the " company, and he whom thou fawest with " me, is one of my gang."

^{*} The holy brotherhood in Spain, called la Santa Hermandad, was formerly, an affociation to suppress robbers, in times of civil commotion; and at this day, is an establishment kept up through all the kingdoms and provinces of Spain, for the same purpose.

CHAP. V.

Of the arrival of more thieves in the subterranean babitation, and the agreeable conversation that bappened among them.

Olgnior Rolando had scarce done speaking, when fix new faces appeared in the hall; these were the lieutenant with five of the company, who returned loaded with booty, which confifted of two hampers full of fugar, cinnamon, pepper, dried figs, almonds and raifins: the lieutenant addressing himself to the captain, told him, that he had taken these hampers from a grocer of Benavento, whose mule he had also carried off. When he had given an account of his expedition to his fuperior, the pillage of the grocer was ordered into the store, and it was unanimously agreed to make merry. A table being covered in the great hall, I was fent back into the kitchen, where dame Leonarda instructed me in the nature of my office; and, yielding to necessity, (fince my cruel fate had fo ordained) I fuppressed my forrow, and prepared myself for the fervice of those worthy gentlemen.

My first essay was on the side-board, which I adorned with silver cups, and many stone-bottles of that good wine which signior Rolando had praised so much. I afterwards brought in two ragouts, which were no sooner served, than the whole company sat down to eat. They began with a good appetite, while

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I stood behind, ready to supply them with wine; and acquitted myself so handsomely, that I had the honour to be complimented upon my behaviour. The captain recounted my ftory in a few words, which afforded a good deal of diversion, and afterwards obferved that I did not want merit: but I was at that time cured of my vanity, and could hear myself praised without danger. Not one of them was filent on the subject; they said, I seemed born to be their cup-bearer; that I was worth an hundred of my predeceffor; and although dame Leonarda (fince his death) had been honoured with the office of presenting nectar to those infernal gods, they deprived her of that glorious employment with which they invested me, like a young Ganymede fucceeding an ancient Hebe.

A great dish of roast meat, served up after the ragouts, finished the repast of those gormandizing thieves, who, drinking in proportion to their gluttony, foon became frolickfome, made a hellish noise, and spoke all together: one began a story, another broke a jest, a third shouted, a fourth sung; so that there was nothing but riot and confusion! At length Rolando, tired of a scene in which he was fo little regarded, called, (with a voice that filenced the whole company) "Gentle-" men, I have a proposal to make: instead " of stunning one another in this manner, by " speaking all together, would it not be bet-" ter to entertain ourselves like reasonable VOL. I.

"creatures? There is a thought come into "my head: fince the time of our affociation, "we have never had the curiofity to know what families we are derived from, and by "what train of adventures we have been fe"verally led to embrace this way of life: as "these things seem worthy to be known, let "us, for our diversion, communicate them to "one another." The lieutenant, and the rest, as if they had something very entertaining to relate, embraced, with great demonstrations of joy, the proposal of their chief, who be-

gan his own history in these words.

"Gentlemen, you must know that I am the only fon of a rich citizen of Madrid: the day of my birth was celebrated in the family, by vast rejoicings; my father, pretty well stricken in years, was ravished at sight of an heir, and my mother undertook to suckle me at her own breasts: her father, who was still alive, was a good old man, who meddled with nothing but his beads, and recounted his own warlike exploits, having been many years in the army; fo that becoming infensibly the idol of these three persons, I was incessantly dandled in their arms. Left study should fatigue me in my tender years, I was allowed to fpend them in the most childish amusements; my father observing that children ought not to apply feriously to any thing, until time should have ripened the understanding. In expectation of this maturity, I neither learned to read nor write, but, nevertheless, made , good

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good use of my time: for my father taught me a thousand different games: I became perfectly acquainted with cards, was no stranger to dice; and my grandfather filled my head with romantic stories of the military expeditions in which he had been concerned. He fung the same catches over and over, and when I had got ten or twelve lines by heart, by dint of hearing them repeated for three months together, my memory became a fubject for admiration to my prrents, who feemed no less satisfied with my genius. When profiting by the liberty I enjoyed of speaking what came uppermost, I used to interrupt their discourse with my nonsensical prattle-"Ah! what a charming creature it is!" (would my father cry, looking at me with inexpressible delight) while my mamma overwhelmed me with careffes, and my old grandfire wept with joy. I committed, in their prefence, the most indecent actions with impunity: every thing was forgiven; and in fhort, they adored me. In the mean time, having attained my twelfth year, without being put to school, a master was at length provided: but he received precise orders, to instruct me without using any violence, being only permitted to threaten me fometimes, with a view of inspiring me with awe. This permission had not the most falutary effects upon me, who either laughed at his menaces, or, with tears in my eyes, went and complained to my mother and grand-papa of his barbarity

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barity. It was in vain for the poor devil to deny the accusation, he was looked upon as a tyrant, and my affertion always believed, in spite of his remonstrance. I happened one day to scratch myself, upon which, setting up my pipes, as if he had slead me, my mother came running in, and turned my master out of doors, though he protested and took heaven to witness, that he had not touched my skin.

In the same manner I got rid of all my preceptors, until fuch an one as I wanted prefented himself: this was a batchelor of Alcala: an excellent tutor for a person of fashion's child! he was a lover of play, women and wine, consequently the fittest person in the world for me. The first thing he set about was to gain my affection, in which he fucceeded, and, by these means, gained the love of my parents, who left me entirely to his management: indeed they had no cause to repent of their confidence; for, in a very little time, he made me perfect in knowledge of the world: by dint of carrying me along with him, to the places he frequented, I imbibed his taste so well, that, except in Latin, I became an universal proficient; and when I found I had no further occasion for his instructions, he went to offer them elsewhere

If, during my childhood I had lived pretty freely, it was quite another thing, when I became master of my own actions: I every moment

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ment ridiculed my parents, who did nothing but laugh at my fallies, which were the more agreeable, the more infolence they contained. Mean while, I committed all kinds of debauchery, in the company of other young men of the same disposition; and as our parents did not supply us with money sufficient to support such a delicious life, every one pilfered what he could, at his own home; but that being also insufficient, we began to rob in the dark; when, unfortunately, the corregidor got notice of us, and would have caused us to be apprehended, had we not been informed of his treacherous defign. Upon which we consulted our safety in flight, and transferred the scene of our exploits to the highway. Since which time, gentlemen, God has given me grace to grow old in my profession, in fpite of the dangers to which it is exposed."

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Here the captain left off speaking, and the lieutenant, taking his turn, began with "Gentlemen, an education quite opposite to that of signior Rolando has, nevertheless, produced the same effect. My father was a butcher of Toledo, reckoned the greatest brute in the whole city, and my mother's disposition not much more gentle. While I was a child, they whipt me, as if it had been through emulation, at the rate of a thousand stripes a day: the least fault I committed was attended with the most severe chastisement; and it was in vain for me to ask pardon, with tears in my eyes, and protest that I was sorry for

what I had done; far from being forgiven, I was often punished without a cause; while my father belaboured me, my mother. (as if he had not exerted himself) instead of interceeding for her child, frequently came to his affiftance. This treatment inspired me with such aversion for my paternal habitation, that I ran away before I had attained my fourteenth year, and taking the road of Arragon, went to Saragosa, subsisting on charity by the way. There I conforted with beggars, who led a pretty comfortable life; they taught me to. counterfeit blindness, to appear lame, and afflict my limbs with fictitious ulcers, &c. In the morning (like players, who disguise themselves, in order to appear upon the stage) we prepared ourselves for the different parts we intended to act, and every one ran to his post: in the evening we met again, and enjoyed ourselves all night, at the expence of those who had compassion on us in the day. Tired, however, of living among those wretches, and ambitious of appearing in a higher sphere, I affociated myself with some knights of the post, who taught me a great many stratagems; but we were, in a very short time, obliged to quit Saragofa, having quarrelled with a certain justice, whose protection we had enjoyed. Every one took his own course: for my own part, I engaged myself in a company of brave fellows, who put travellers under contribution, and liked their manner of living fo well, that, hitherto, I have never felt the least inclination

clination to feek another: I am therefore, gentlemen, very much obliged to the barbarity of my parents; for, had they treated me a little less favagely, instead of being an honourable lieutenant, I should have been doubtless, at this day, a miserable butcher."

The next that spoke was a young thief, who, fitting between the captain and lieutenant, faid, "Gentlemen, the stories we have heard, are neither fo complicated, nor fo curious as mine: I owe my being to a peasant's wife, who lived in the neighbourhood of Seville: three weeks after she had brought me into the world, (being still young, handsome and healthy) it was proposed to her, to nurse a man of quality's only fon, lately born in Seville: this propofal my mother chearfully accepted, and went to fetch the child, which being committed to her care, she no sooner brought it home to her house, than perceiving fome fmall refemblance between us, she was tempted to make me pass for the infant of quality, in hopes that she should one day be well rewarded by me, for that kind office: my father, who was not more scrupulous than his neighbours, approved of the deceit; fo that, after having made us exchange our fwaddling-cloaths, the fon of Don Rodrigo de Herrera was fent to another nurse, under my name, and my mother fuckled me under his.

Notwithstanding all the fine things that are said of instinct and the force of blood, the

little gentleman's parents swallowed the change with great ease: they had not the least sufpicion of the trick that was played upon them; for, till I was seven years old, I was scarce ever out of their arms. Their intention being to make me a compleat cavalier, all forts of mafters were provided; but I had no great inclination for the exercises I learned; and still less relish for the sciences they explained: I loved much better to game with the fervants, for whose company, I frequented the kitchen and stable: but play was not long my predominant passion; for before I was seventeen years of age, I got drunk daily, feduced all the women in the house, but attached myself chiefly to the cookmaid, who feemed to merit my principal regard: she was a fat jolly wench, whose pleasantry and sleekness pleased me much; and I made love to her, with so little circumspection, that Don Rodrigo himself perceived it. He reprimanded me sharply, reproached me with the baseness of my inclinations, and, lest the fight of this aimable object should render his remonftrances ineffectual, turned my princess out of doors.

I was disgusted at this piece of conduct, for which I resolved to be revenged: with this view, I stole his lady's jewels, and runing in quest of my fair Helen, who had retired to the house of a washerwoman of her acquaintance, I carried her off, at noon-day, to the end that nobody might be ignorant of my

my passion. That was not all: I conducted her into her own country, where I married her in a folemn manner, that I might not only give Herrera the more vexation, but also afford fuch a worthy example to the children of noblemen. Three months after my marriage, I was informed of Don Rodrigo's death; a piece of news I did not receive with indifference; but repairing instantly to Seville, in order to demand his estate, I found things strangely altered! my mother, who was dead, had been filly enough, on her death-bed, to confess the whole affair, in presence of the curate of the village, and other credible witnesses; in consequence of which, the true son of Don Rodrigo was already in possession of my place, or rather of his own; and had been received with the more joy, on account of their being diffatisfied with me. Wherefore, having nothing to expect from that quarter, and no longer feeling any inclination for my fat spouse, I joined some gentlemen of the road, with whom I began my expeditions."

The young robber having ended his story, another informed us, "That he was the son of a merchant at Burgos, and, prompted by an indiscreet devotion, had taken the habit, and professed a very austere order, from which in a few years, he apostatized." In short, these eight highwaymen spoke in their turns, and when I had heard them all, I was not at all surprized to find them together. The discourse was afterwards changed; they brought

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upon the carpet several projects for their next excursion; and after having come to a determination, got up from table, in order to go to rest. Having lighted their wax candles, and withdrawn, I followed captain Rolando into his chamber, where, while I helped to undress him, "Well, Gil Blas, (said he) thou " feeft how we live: we are always merry, " and hatred and envy never get footing "among us: we never have the least quarrel " with one another, but are more united than " a convent of monks: thou wilt, my child, " (purfued he) lead a very agreeable life in "this place; for I don't believe thee fool " enough to boggle at living with robbers: " eh! dost thou think there are any honester " people in the world than we! no, my lad, "every one loves to prey upon his fellows: "it is an universal principle, though various-" ly exerted: conquerors (for example) feize "upon the territories of their neighbours; "people of quality borrow without any in-"tention of repaying; bankers, treasurers, " exchange-brokers, clerks, and all kinds of " merchants, great and fmall, are not a whit " more conscientious. As for your limbs of "the law, I need not mention them; every " body knows what they can do: I must own " however, that they are somewhat more hu-" mane than we; for we often put innocent " people to death, and they fometimes fave " the lives of the guilty."

CHAP. VI.

Of the attempt of Gil Blas to make his escape, and the success thereof.

X7 HEN the captain of the thieves had made this apology for his profession, he went to bed, and I returned into the hall, where I uncovered the table, and put every thing in order: from thence I went into the kitchen, where Domingo (so was the old negro called) expected me to supper. Tho' I had no appetite, I sat down with them; but as I could not eat, and appeared as melancholy as I had cause to be so, these two apparitions, equally qualified, undertook to give me confolation: "Why do you afflict yourfelf, child? " (faid the old lady:) you ought rather to "rejoice at your good fortune.-You are "young, and feem to be of an easy temper; " consequently would have been, in a little "time, lost in the world: there you would "have fallen into the hands of libertines, " who would have engaged you in all manner " of debauchery: whereas here your inno-"cence finds a fecure haven." "Dame "Leonarda is in the right, (faid the old black-" a-moor with great gravity) and let me add, the world is full of affliction: thank hea-" ven, therefore, my friend, for having de-" livered thee all at once from the dangers, " difficulties, and misery of life." I bore

I bore their discourse with patience, because to fret myself would have done me no service: at last Domingo, having eaten and drank plentifully, retired into the stable; while Leonarda, with a lamp in her hand, conducted me into a vault, which served as a burying-place to the robbers who died a natural death, and in which I perceived a miferable truckle-bed, that looked more like a tomb than a couch: "Here is your bed-" chamber, (faid she:) the lad, whose place " you have the good fortune to supply, slept "here, as long as he lived among us; and " now that he is dead, refts in the same place. "-He flipt away in the flower of his age: "I hope you will not be so simple as to fol-"low his example." So faying, she put the light into my hand, and returned into her kitchen; while I, fetting the lamp upon the ground, threw myself upon the bed, not so much in expectation of enjoying the least repose, as with a view to indulge my melancholy reflection. "O heavens, (cried I) was " ever destiny so terrible as mine! I am ba-" nished from the fight of the fun; and, as " if it was not enough to be buried alive at " the age of eighteen, I am moreover con-" demned to ferve thieves, to fpend the day " among highwaymen, and the night among "the dead!" I wept bitterly over these sug-" gestions, which seem'd to me-and were in effect extremely shocking. A thousand times I curfed my uncle's defign of fending me to SalaSalamanca: I repented of my flying from justice at Cacabelos, and even wished I had fubmitted to the torture.—But recollecting that I confumed myself in vain complaints, to no purpose, I began to think of some means by which I might escape. "What! (faid I to myself) is it then impossible to de-" liver myself! the thieves are asleep, the " cook-maid and negro will be in the fame " condition presently: ean't I, while they are " all quiet, by the help of my lamp, find " out the passage through which I descended "to this infernal abode? 'Tis true, indeed, "I don't think myself strong enough to lift " the trap-door that covers the entry; but "however, that I may have nothing to re-" proach myself with, I will try: my de-" fpair will, perhaps, fupply me with strength, " and who knows but I may accomplish it."

Having then projected this great design, I got up when I imagined Leonarda and Domingo were at rest; and taking the lamp in my hand, went out of the vault, recommending myself to all the saints in heaven.—It was not without great dissiculty that I found again all the windings of this new labyrinth, and arrived at the door of the stable; where, at last perceiving the passage I was in search of, I went into it, advancing towards the trap with as much nimbleness as joy:—but, alas! in the middle of the entry I met with a cursed iron grate, fast locked, and consisting of strong bars so close to one another, that I could scarce thrust

thrust my hand between them. I was confounded at fight of this new obstacle, which I had not observed when I came in, the grate being then open: I did not fail, however, to feel the bars and examine the lock, which I even attempted to force; when, all of a fudden, I felt a-cross my shoulders five or six hearty thwacks with a bull's pizzle! upon which I uttered fuch a dreadful yell, that the whole cavern echoed with the found; and looking behind me, perceived the old negro in his thirt, with a dark lanthorn in one hand, and the instrument of his execution in the other. " Ah ha! Mr. Jackanapes, (faid he) " you want to make your escape, hah? You " must not imagine that I am to be caught "napping.—I heard you all the while.—I "fuppose you thought the grate was open, "didn't you?-Know, my boy, that hence-" forth thou shalt always find it shut; and " that when we detain any body here, against "his inclination, he must be more cunning

"than thou, if ever he gets off."

In the mean time two or three of the thives. starting out of their sleep at the noise of my cries, and believing that the holy brotherhood was coming fouze upon them, got up in a hurry, and alarmed their companions. In an instant all were a-foot, and, seizing their fwords and carabines, advanced half naked to the place where Domingo chastised me; but they no fooner understood the cause of the noise they had heard, than their uneasiness

was changed into fits of laughter.-" How. "Gil Blas, (said the apostate thief to me) "thou hast not been here fix hours, and "want'ft to take thy leave of us already! " fure thou must have a great aversion to a " retired life, hah? What would'ft thou do. " if thou wert a carthusian friar? Go to bed: "thou art quit for once, on account of the "ftripes Domingo has bestow'd on thee; but " if ever thou should'st make another effort " to escape, by St. Bartholomew! we will flea "thee alive." This faid, he withdrew; the other thieves retired into their apartments; the old negro, proud of his exploit, returned into his stable; and I sneaked back to my Golgotha, where I fpent the remaining part of the night in fighs and tears.

CHAP. VII.

Of the behaviour of Gil Blas, when he could do no better.

DURING the first days of my captivity I was like to fink under the sorrow that oppress'd me, and might have been said to die by inches; but at last my good genius inspired me with the resolution to dissemble: I affected to appear less sad than usual; I began to laugh and sing, tho, God knows, with an aching heart. In a word, I counterfeited so well, that Leonarda and Domingo were deceived, and believed that the bird was at last reconciled to his cage.—The robbers were

were of the same opinion; for I assumed a gay air when I fill'd wine for them, and mingled in their conversation, whenever I found an opportunity of acting the buffoon. This freedom, far from displeasing, afforded them diversion. "Gil Blas, (said the cap-" tain to me one evening, while I entertain'd " them in this manner) thou hast done well, " my lad, to banish thy melancholy: I am " charmed with thy wit and humour: I find " people are not known all at once; for I did " not think thou hadft been so sprightly and

" good natured."

The rest joined also in my praise, and appeared fo well fatisfied with me, that, taking the advantage of this good disposition, "Gen-" tlemen, (faid I) allow me to tell my mind: " fince my abode in this place I find myself " quite another fort of a person than hereto-" fore. You have divested me of the pre " judices of education, and I infensibly im-"bibe your disposition: I have a taste for "your profession, and a longing desire of "being honoured with the name of your " companion, and of sharing the dangers of "your expeditions." All the company approved of my discourse, and commended my forwardness; so that it was unanimously resolved to let me serve a little longer, in order to approve myself worthy, then carry me out in their excursions; after which I should obtain the honourable place I demanded. Well.

Well, then I was obliged to perfift in my diffimulation, and exercise the post of cupbearer still; a circumstance that mortified me extremely: for my defign in aspiring to the honour of becoming a thief, was only to have the liberty of taking the air with the rest, in hopes that one day I should be able to escape from them, in the course of their expeditions. This hope alone supported my life; but nevertheless appeared so distant, that I tried more than once to baffle the vigilance of Domingo; tho' it was never in my power, he being always fo much upon his guard, that I would have defied an hundred Orpheus's to charm fuch a Cerberus. 'Tis true, indeed, I did not do all that I could have done to beguile him, left I should have waken'd his fufpicion; for he had a hawk's eye over me, and I was obliged to act with the utmost circumfpection, that I might not betray myself. I therefore refigned myfelf to my fate, until the time should be expired that was prescribed by the robbers for receiving me into their gang; and this event I expected as impatiently as if I had been to be inrolled in a lift of commissioners.

Heaven be praised! in fix months that time arrived; when signior Rolando, addressing himself to his company, said, "Gentlemen, "we must keep our words with Gil Blas: "I have no bad opinion of that young fellow, and I hope we shall make something of him: it is therefore my opinion, that we "carry

" carry him along with us to-morrow to ga-"ther laurels on the highway, and usher him " into the path of glory." The robbers agreed to their captain's proposal; and to shew that they already looked upon me as one of their companions, from that moment dispensed with my service, and re-established dame Leonarda in the office she had lost on my account. They made me throw away my habit, that confifted of a forry threadbare short cassock, and dress'd me in the spoils of a gentleman whom they had lately robb'd; after which I prepared for my first campaign.

CHAP. V.

Gil Blas accompanies the thieves, and performs an exploit on the bigbway.

T was in the month of September, when towards the close of the night, I came out of the cavern in company with the robbers, armed like them, with a carabine, two piftols, fword and bayonet, and mounted on a pretty good horse, which they had taken from the same gentleman whose dress I wore. I had lived fo long in darkness, that when day broke I was dazzled with the light, which however foon became familiar to my eyes.

Having passed hard by Ponferrada, we lay in ambush in a small wood which bordered on the road to Leon. There we waited, expecting that fortune would throw some good luck in our way, when we perceived a Dominican

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(contrary to the custom of these good fathers) riding upon a forry mule: " God be praifed, " (cried the captain laughing) there's the coup " d' essai of Gil Blas:---let him go and un-" load that monk, while we observe his be-"haviour."---All the rest were of opinion that this was a very proper commission for me, and exhorted me to acquit myself handsomely in it. "Gentlemen, (faid I) you shall be " fatisfied: I will make that priest as bare as " my hand, and bring hither his mule in a " twinkling." " No, no, (replied Rolando) " fhe is not worth the trouble: bring us only " the purse of his reverence; that is all we " expect of thee." For this purpose I sallied from the Wood, and made towards the clergyman, begging heaven, all the way, to pardon the action I was about to commit. I would gladly have made my escape that moment; but the greatest part of the thieves were better mounted than I, and, had they perceived me running away, would have been at my heels in an instant, and entrapt me again in a very fhort time, or perhaps discharged their carabines at me; in which case I should have had nothing to brag of .--- Not daring therefore to hazard fuch a delicate step, I came up with the prieft, and clapping a piftol to his breast, demanded his purse. He stopt short to furvey me, and without feeming much afraid, " Child, (faid he) you are very young: " --- you have got a bad trade by the hand, " betimes." " Bad as it is, father, (I re-" plied)

" plied) I wish I had begun it sooner.".---" Ah! fon, fon, (faid the good friar, who " did not comprehend the true meaning of " my words) what blindness!--- allow me to " represent to you the miserable condition" .--" Ofather, (faid I, interrupting him hastily) " a truce with your morals, if you please: " my business on the highway is not to hear " fermons; I want money." -- " Money! " (cried he, with an air of aftonishment) you " are little acquainted with the charity of the " Spaniards, if you think people of my cloth " have occasion for money while they travel " in this kingdom. Undeceive yourself;---" we are every where chearfully received, " have lodging and victuals, and nothing is " asked in return but our prayers: in short,
" we never carry money about us on the " road; but confide altogether in providence." " That wont go down with me: (I replied) " your dependance is not altogether fo vi-" fionary; for, you have always fome good of piftoles in referve, to make more fure of " providence. But, my good father, (added 66 1) let us ha' done :---my comrades, who " are in that Wood, begin to be impatient; " therefore throw you purse upon the ground " instantly, or I shall certainly put you to " death."

At these words, which I uttered with a menacing look, the friar, seeming asraid of his life, said, "Hold! I will satisfy you then, "since " fince there is a necessity for it:--- Ifee tropes " and figures have no effect on people of your " profession." So saying, he pulled from underneath his gown a large purse of shamoy leather, which he dropt upon the ground. Then I told him, he might continue his journey; a permission he did not give me the trouble of repeating; but clap'd his heels to the sides of his mule, which belying the opinion I had conceived of her, (for I imagined the was not much better than my uncle's) all of a fudden went off at a pretty round pace. As foon as he was at a distance I alighted, and taking up the purse, which seemed heavy, mounted again, and got back to the wood in a trice, where the thieves waited with impatience, to congratulate me upon my victory. -Scarce would they give me time to difmount, fo eager were they to embrace me: " Courage, Gil Blas! (faid Rolando) thou " haft done wonders.—I have had my eyes " on thee during thy expedition: I have ob-" ferved thy countenance all the time, and I " prophefy that thou wilt in time become an " excellent highway-man." The lieutenant and the rest approved of the prediction, which they affured me I should one day certainly fulfil. I thanked them for the high idea they had conceived of me, and promifed to do all that lay in my power to maintain it.

After they had loaded me with fo much undeferved praise, they were desirous of examining

mining the booty I had made. " Come, " (faid they) let us fee what there is in the " clergyman's purse." " It ought to be well " furnished (continued one among them) for " those good fathers don't travel like pil-The captain untied the purse, " grims." and, opening it, pulled out two or three handfuls of copper medals, mixed with bits of hallowed wax, and fome fcapularies*. At the fight of fuch an uncommon prey, all the robbers burst out into immoderate fits of laughter. "Upon my foul, (cried the lieutenant) " we are very much obliged to Gil Blas for " having, in his coup d' essai, performed a " theft so salutary to the company." This piece of wit brought on more. Those miscreants, and he in particular who had apoftatized, began to be very merry upon the matter: a thousand fallies escaped them, that too well denoted their immorality. - I was the only person who did not laugh, my mirth being check'd by the ralliers, who enjoyed themfelves at my expence. Every one having shot his bolt, the captain faid to me, " In faith, "Gil Blas, I advise thee as a friend to joke " no more with monks, who are, generally " fpeaking, too arch and cunning for fuch as " thee."

^{*} Scapularies are pieces of confecrated stuff, worn by priests and nuns,

CHAP. IX.

Of the serious affair that followed this adventure.

W E remained in the wood the greatest part of the day, without perceiving any traveller that could make amends for the priest. At last we left it, in order to return to our cavern, confining our exploits to that ludicrous event which still constituted the subject of our discourse, when we discovered at a distance a coach drawn by four mules, advancing at a brisk trot, and escorted by three men on horseback, who seemed well armed. Upon this Rolando ordered his troop to halt, and held a council; the refult of which was, that they should attack the coach. We were immediately arranged according to his difposition, and march'd up to it in order of battle.—In spite of the applause I had acquired in the wood, I felt myself seized with an universal tremor, and immediately a cold fweat broke out all over my body, which I looked upon as no very favourable omen.-To crown my good luck I was in the front of the line, between the captain the lieutenant, who had stationed me there, that I might accustom myself to stand fire all at once. Rolando observing how much nature suffered within me, looked at me askance, saying, with a fierce countenance, " Hark'ee, Gil Blas, " remember to do thy duty; for if thou " hang'ft an arse, I'll blow thy brains out." I was

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I was too well persuaded that he would keep his word to neglect this caution; for which reason I thought of nothing now but of re-

commending my foul to God.

In the mean time the coach and horsemen approached, who knowing what fort of people we were, and gueffing our defign by our appearance, stopt within musket-shot, and prepared to receive us; while a gentleman of a good mien, and richly dress'd, came out of the coach, and mounting a horse that was led by one of his attendants, put himself at their head, without any other arms than a fword and a pair of pistols.—Tho' they were but four against nine, (the coachman remaining on the feat) they advanced towards us with a boldness that redoubled my fear: I did not fail, however, tho' I trembled in every joint, to make ready to fire; but, to tell the truth, I fhut my eyes, and turned away my head, when I discharged my carabine; and, confidering the manner in which it went off, my conscience ought to be acquitted on that score.

I will not pretend to describe the action; for although I was present I saw nothing, and my fear, in confounding my imagination, concealed from me the horror of the spectacle that occasion'd it.—All I know of the matter is, that after a great noise of firing, I heard my companions shout, and cry victory! victory! At that acclamation, the terror, which had taken possession of my senses, dissipated, and I saw the four horsemen stretched lifeless



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on the field of battle. On our side we had but one man killed, and he was no other than the apostate, who had met with his deserts for his apostacy and profane jests upon the scapularies. The lieutenant received a wound in the arm; but it was a very slight one, the

thot having only ruffled the fkin.

Signior Rolando ran immediately to the door of the coach, in which there was a lady of about four or five and twenty years of age, who appeared very handsome, notwithstanding the melancholy condition in which she was; for she had swooned during the engagement, and was not yet recovered. While he was busied in looking after her, we took care of the booty, beginning with securing the horses of the killed, which, frighted at the noise of the firing, had run away, after having lost their riders. As for the mules they had not stirr'd, although the coachman (during the action) had quitted his place, in order to make his escape.—We alighted, and, unyoking, loaded them with fome trunks we found fasten'd to the coach, before and behind. This being done, the lady, who had not as yet recovered her fenses, was (by order of the captain) taken out, and placed on horseback before one of the robbers that was best mounted; after which, quitting the high road, the coach, and the dead, whom we had ftript, we carried off the lady, the mules, and the horses.

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CHAP.

CHAP. X.

In what manner the robbers behaved to the lady.

—Of the great design which Gil Blas projected,
and the issue thereof.

T T was within an hour of day-break when we arrived at our habitation; and the first thing we did was to lead our beafts into the stable, where we were obliged to tie them to the rack, and take care of them with our own hands, the old negro having been (three days before) seized with a violent fit of the gout and rheumatism, that kept him a-bed, deprived of the use of all his limbs: the only member at liberty was his tongue, which he employed in testifying his impatience, by the most horrible execrations. Leaving this miferable wretch to fwear and blaspheme, we went to the kitchen, where our whole attention was engross'd by the lady, and we succeeded so well as to bring her out of her fit: but when she had recovered the use of her fenses, and saw herself in the hands of several men whom she did not know, she perceived her misfortune, and was feized with horror! The most lively forrow and direful despair appeared in her eyes, which she lifted up to heaven, as if to reproach it with the indignities that threaten'd her: then giving way of a fudden to these dismal apprehensions, she relapsed into a swoon; her eyelids closed, and the robbers imagined that death would deprive

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prive them of their prey.—The captain, thinking it more proper to leave her to herself than to torment her with their assistance, ordered her to be carried to Leonarda's bed, where she was left alone, at the hazard of what

might happen.

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We repaired to the hall, where one of the thieves, who had been bred a furgeon, drefs'd the lieutenant's wound: after which, being defirous of feeing what was in the trunks, we found fome of them filled with lace and linnen, others with cloaths, and the last we open'd contained some bags full of pistoles; at fight of which the gentlemen concerned were infinitely rejoiced. This inquiry being made, the cook-maid furnished the side-board, laid the cloth, and ferved up supper.-Our conversation at first turned upon the great victory we had obtained; and Rolando addreffing himself to me, "Confess, Gil Blas. " (said he) confess that thou wast horribly "afraid." I ingenuously owned, that what he faid was very true; but that when I should have made two or three campaigns, I would fight like a knight-errant: whereupon the whole company took my part, observing that my fear was excufable; that the action had been very hot; and that, confidering I was a young fellow who had never fmell'd gunpowder, I had acquitted myself pretty well.

The discourse afterwards falling upon the mules and horses we had brought into our retreat, it was agreed, that to-morrow before

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day we should all set out together, in order to fell them at Mansilla, which place, in all probability, the report of our expedition had not yet reached. This resolution being taken, we finished our meal, and returned into the kitchen to visit the lady, whom we found still in the fame fituation .- Nevertheless, tho' it was with difficulty we could perceive any figns of life in her, some of the villains did not scruple to regard her with a profane eye, and even to difcover a brutal defire, which they would have fatisfied immediately, had not Rolando prevented it, by representing to them, that they ought at least to wait until the lady should get the better of that oppression of sorrow which deprived her of reflection.—The respect they had for their captain restrained their incontinence, otherwise nothing could have faved the lady, whose honour death itself, perhaps, would not have been able to fecure.

We left this unfortunate gentlewoman in the same condition in which we found her, Rolando contenting himself with laying injunctions on Leonarda to take care of her, while every one retired into his own apartment. For my own part, as soon as I got to bed, instead of resigning myself to sleep, I did nothing but think of that lady's missfortune: I never doubted that she was a person of quality, and look'd upon her situation as the more deplorable for that reason.—I could not without shuddering represent to myself the horrors to which she was destined, and felt

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myself as deeply concerned for her as if I had been attach'd by blood or friendship. At last, after having bewailed her hard fate, I began to revolve the means of rescuing her honour from the danger in which it was, and of delivering myself at the same time from the subterranean abode.—I recollected that the old negro was not in a condition to move, and that, since his being taken ill, the cook-wench kept the key of the grate.—This reslection warm'd my imagination, and made me conceive a scheme, which I digested so well, that I began to put it in practice immediately, in the following manner.

Pretending to be racked with the cholick, I began with complaints and groans; then raifing my voice, uttered dreadful cries, that waken'd the robbers, and brought them inftantly to my bed-side. When they asked what made me roar fo hideously, I answered, that I was tortured with an horrible cholick: and, the better to perfuade them of the truth of what I said, grinded my teeth, made frightful grimaces and contorsions, and writhed myself in a strange manner: then I became quiet all of a fudden, as if my pains had given me some respite.—In a moment after, I began again to bounce upon the bed, and twift about my limbs: in a word, I play'd my part fo well, that the thieves, cunning as they were, allowed themselves to be deceived, and believed, in good earnest, that I was violently griped. In a moment all of them were busied

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in endeavours to ease me: one brought a bottle of usquebaugh, and made me swallow one half of it: another, in spite of my teeth, injected a clyster of oil of sweet almonds; a third warmed a napkin, and applied it broiling hot to my belly.—I roared for mercy in vain: they imputed my cries to the cholick, and continued to make me fuffer real pains, in attempting to free me from one I did not feel. At last, being able to resist them no longer, I was fain to tell them that the gripes had left me, and to conjure them to give me quar-Upon which they left off tormenting me with their remedies, and I took care to trouble them no more with my complaints, for fear of undergoing their good offices a fecond time.

This scene lasted almost three hours; after which the robbers, judging that day was not far off, prepared themselves to set out for Manfilla: I would have got up, to make them believe I was very defirous of accompanying them; but they would not fuffer me to rife, fignior Rolando faying, "No, no, Gil Blas, " ftay at home, child; thy cholick may re-" turn.—Thou shalt go with us another time; "but thou art in no condition to go abroad " to-day." I was afraid of infifting upon it too much, lest he should yield to my request; therefore I only appeared very much mortified, because I could not be of the party. This I acted fo naturally, that they went out of the cavern without the least suspicion of W

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n of my my defign.-After their departure, which I had endeavoured to haften by my prayers, I faid to myself, "Now, Gil Blas! now is the "time for thee to have resolution: arm thy-" felf with courage, to finish that which thou " haft fo happily begun.—Domingo is not in "a condition to oppose thy enterprize, and "Leonarda cannot hinder its execution.-"Seize this opportunity of escaping, than "which, perhaps, thou wilt never find one "more favourable." These suggestions filled me with confidence; I got up, took my fword and pistols, and went first towards the kitchen; but before I entered, hearing Leonarda speaking, stopt, in order to listen. She was talking to the unknown lady, who, having recovered her fenses, and understood the whole of her misfortune, wept, in the utmost bitterness of despair.—" Weep, my child, (said "the old beldam to her) dissolve yourself in-"to tears, and don't spare sighs; for that " will give you ease. You have had a dan-" gerous qualm: but now, there is nothing " to fear, fince you shed abundance of tears. "-Your grief will abate by little and little, " and you will foon accustom yourself to live " with our gentlemen, who are men of ho-" nour.—You will be treated like a princess, " meet with nothing but complaifance, and " fresh proofs of affection every day.-There " are a great many women who would be " glad to be in your place." D 4

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I did not give Leonarda time to proceed, but entering, clapt a piftol to her breaft, and, with a threatening look, commanded her to furrender the key of the grate. She was confounded at my behaviour, and, though almost at the end of her career, fo much attached to life, that she durst not refuse my demand. Having got the key in my possession, I addressed myself to the afflicted lady, saying, " Madam, heaven has fent you a deliverer; " rife and follow me, and I will conduct you "whithersoever you shall please to direct." The lady did not remain deaf, to my words. which made fuch an impression upon her, that, fummoning up all the strength she had left, she got up, and throwing herself at my feet, conjured me to preserve her honour. I raifed her and affured her, that she might rely upon me; then taking fome cords, which I perceived in the kitchen, with her assistance, I tied Leonarda to the feet of a large table, fwearing that if she opened her mouth, I would kill her on the spot. I afterwards lighted a flambeau, and going with the stranger, into the room where the gold and filver was deposited, filled my pockets with pistoles and double pistoles; and to induce the lady to follow my example, affured her, that she only took back her own. When we had made a good provision of this kind, we went towards the stable, which I entered alone with my pistols cocked, firmly believing that the old negro, in spite of his gout and rheumatism, would not

not fuffer me to faddle and bridle my horse in quiet; and fully resolved to cure him of all his distempers, if he should take it in his head to be troublesome: but, by good luck, he was fo overwhelmed with the pains he had undergone, and those he still suffered, that I brought my horse out of the stable, even without his feeming to perceive it; and the lady waiting for me at the door, we threaded, with all dispatch, the passage that led out of the cavern, arrived at the grate, which we opened, and at last came to the trap-door, which we lifted up with great difficulty, or rather the defire of escaping lent us new strength, without which we should not have been able to fucceed.

Day began to appear just as we found ourfelves delivered from the jaws of this abyss; and as we fervently defired to be at a greater. distance from it, I threw myself into the saddle, the lady mounting behind me, and following the first path that presented itself, at a round gallop, got out of the forest in a short time, and entered a plain, divided by feveral roads, one of which we took at random. I was mortally afraid that it would conduct us to Manfilla, where we might meet with Rolando and his confederates; but happily my fear was vain. We arrived at the town of Aftorga, at two o'clock in the afternoon, where people gazed at us with extreme attention, as if it had been an extraordinary thing to fee a woman on horseback, sitting behind a man. We

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alighted at the first inn we came to, where the first thing I did, was to order a partridge and a young rabbit to the fire; and while this was a-doing, I conducted the lady into a chamber, where we began to converse with one another; for we had rode so fast, that we had no discourse upon the road. She shewed how senfible she was of the service I had done to her, and observed, that after I had performed such a generous action, she could not perfuade herfelf that I was a companion of the thieves, from whom I had rescued her. I told her my ftory, in order to confirm the good opinion fhe had conceived of me; and, by that means, engaged her to honour me with her confidence, and inform me of her misfortunes, which she recounted, as I shall relate in the following chapter.

CHAP. XI.

The bistory of Donna Mencia of Mosquera.

I Was born at Valladolid, and my name is Donna Mencia of Mosquera. Don Martin, my father, after having spent almost his whole patrimony in the service of his king, was killed in Portugal, at the head of his own regiment, and left me so moderately provided, that though I was an only child, I was far from being a good match. I did not want admirers, however, in spite of the lowness of my fortune: a good many of the most considerable cavaliers in Spain made their addresses.

dresses to me; but he who attracted my attention most, was Don Alvaro de Mello: he was indeed more handsome than any of his rivals; but more substantial qualifications determined me in his favour: he was endued with wit, prudence, probity and valour, and withal the most gallant man in the world: when he gave entertainments, nothing could be more elegant, and when he appeared at tournaments, every body admired his vigour and address: I preferred him therefore to all

others, and married him accordingly.

A few days after our marriage, he happened to meet with Don Andrea de Baefa, who had been one of his rivals, in a private place, where quarreling with each other, they came to blows, and Don Andrea lost his life in the rencounter. As he was nephew to the corregidor of Valladolid, a violent man, and mortal enemy to the family of Mello, Don Alvaro knew he could not leave the city toofoon: he returned home in a hurry, and, whilethey faddled his horfe, told me what had happened. -- "My dear Mencia, (faid he) we " must part! you know the corregidor: don't " let us then flatter ourselves, for he will pro-" fecute me with the utmost rancour; and " as you are not ignorant of his credit, you "know I cannot be fafe in this kingdom." He was fo much penetrated with his own forrow, and with that which he faw take poffession of my breast, that he could say no more; and when I had prevailed upon him

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to furnish himself with some money and jewels, he clasped me in his arms, and, during a whole quarter of an hour, we did nothing but mingle our fighs and tears. At last, being told the horse was ready, he tore himself from me; he departed, and left me in a condition not to be described. Happy! had the excess of my affliction, at that time, put an end to my life! what troubles and forrows would my death have prevented! Some hours after Don Alvaro was gone, the corregidor being informed of his flight, ordered him to be purfued, and spared nothing to have him in his power! but my husband always baffled his pursuit, and kept himself secure, in such a manner, that the judge found himself obliged to limit his revenge to the sole satisfaction of ruining the fortune of a man, whose blood he wanted to shed: his efforts were not unfuccessful, all the effects of Don Alvaro being confiscated.

Left in a most afflicting situation, and having scarce wherewithal to subsist, I began to live a very solitary life, all my attendants being reduced to one maid: I spent the day in bemoaning, not an indigence, which I could have borne with patience; but the absence of my dear husband, whose condition I was utterly ignorant of, although he had promised, in his last melancholy adieu, that he would take care to inform me of his lot, into whatever part of the world his cruel fate should conduct him. Nevertheless, seven long years elapsed.

elapsed, without my hearing the least account of him; and this uncertainty of his destiny, plunged me into an abys of sorrow! At last I was told, that, in fighting for the king of Portugal in Fez, he had lost is life in battle: a man lately returned from Afric confirmed this report, assuring me, that he was perfectly well acquainted with Don Alvaro de Mello, had served with him in the Portugueze army, and even seen him fall in the action: to this he added many other circumstances, which persuaded me, that my husband was no more.

At that time, Don Ambrosio Mesia Carrillo, marquis of Guardia, came to Valladolid: he was one of those old lords who, by the politeness and gallantry of their manners, make people forget their age, and continue still agreeable to the ladies: one day hearing, by accident, the story of Don Alvaro; and being defirous of feeing me, on account of the picture which had been drawn of me; for the satisfaction of his curiosity, he engaged one of my relations, who carried me to her house. Seeing me there, I had the fortune to please him, in spite of the remarks able impression which grief had made on my countenance: but why do I say in spite of it? perhaps he was touched alone by my fad and languishing air, which prepossessed him in favour of my fidelity: his love, in all probability, was the effect of my melancholy; for he told me more than once, that he looked upon me as a miracle of constancy; and that,

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rs d, for this reason, he even envied the fate of my husband, how deplorable soever it was in other respects: in a word, he was struck at sight of me, and had no occasion to see me a second time, in order to take the resolution of mak-

ing me his wife.

He chose the intercession of my kinswoman, towards the obtaining of my consent: she came to my lodgings accordingly, and reprefented to me, that my husband having ended his days in the kingdom of Fez, as we had been informed, it was not reasonable that I should bury my charms any longer; that I had fufficiently bewailed the fate of a man with whom I had been united but a few moments; and that I ought to profit by the occasion that now presented itself; by which means, I should be the happiest woman in the world. Then she extolled the great family of the old marquis, his vast estate, and unblemished character: but her eloquence in displaying the advantages he possessed was in vain: it was not in her power to persuade me; not that I doubted the death of Don Alvaro, or was restrained by the fear of seeing him. again, when I should least expect him; the little inclination, or rather the reluctance, I felt for a second marriage, after having suffered so many misfortunes by my first, was the only obstacle my relation had to remove. She did not despair for all that; on the contrary, it redoubled her zeal for Don Ambrofio; she engaged my whole family in the interests

interests of that lord; my relations pressed me to accept of such an advantageous match; I was every moment besieged, importuned, and tormented; and my misery, which daily increased, contributed not a little to overcome my resistance.

Being unable, therefore, to hold out any longer, I yielded to their pressing instances, and married the marquis of Guardia, who, the day after our nuptials, carried me to a very fine castle which he had, situated near Burgos, between Grajal and Rodillas. He conceived the most violent passion for me, and I observed, in the whole of his behaviour, the utmost desire of pleasing me. His only study was to anticipate my wishes: no husband had ever fuch a tender regard for his wife; and no lover ever shewed more complaifance to his mistress. I should have been paffionately fond of Don Ambrosio, notwithstanding the disproportion of our years, had I been capable of loving any one after Don' Alvaro; but a constant heart can never change. The endeavours of my fecond husband to please me were rendered ineffectual by the remembrance of my first; so that I could only requite his tenderness with pure sentiments of gratitude.

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I was in this disposition, when, one day, taking the air at the window of my apartment, I perceived, in the garden, a kind of peasant, who earnestly looked at me: thinking he was the gardener's servant, I took no notice of him; but next day, being again at the win-

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dow, I faw him in the fame place, and he feemed to view me with uncommon attention; struck with this circumstance, I looked at him, in my turn, and after having some time confidered him, thought I recalled the features of the unfortunate Don Alvaro! This apparition raised an inconceivable tumult within me! I shrieked aloud; but, luckily, there was no body present, except Inez, who, of all my fervants, enjoyed the greatest share of my confidence. When I imparted to her the fufpicion that alarmed me, she laughed at my apprehension, believing that my eyes were impoled upon by some slight resemblance.-"Recollect yourself, madam, (said she) and " don't imagine you have feen your former " husband: what likelihood is there, that he " should be here in the dress of a peasant? " or, indeed, what probability is there of his " being alive? I will go down into the gar-" den, (added she) and talk to this country-" man, and when I have learned who he is, " come back and let you know." Inez accordingly went into the garden, and foon after returned to my apartment in great emotion, faying, " Madam, your suspicion is but too " just! it is Don Alvaro himself whom you " have feen! he has discovered himself, and " demands a fecret interview."

As I had, at that very time, an opportunity of receiving Don Alvaro, the marquis being at Burgos, I ordered my maid to bring him into my closet, by a private stair-case. You

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may well think that I was in a terrible agitation, and altogether unable to support the prefence of a man, who had a right to load me with reproaches. As foon as he appeared, I fainted away. Inez and he flew to my affif tance, and when they had brought me out of my fwoon, Don Alvaro faid, " Madam, for "heaven's fake compose yourself; let not my " presence be a punishment to you; I have " no intention to give you the least pain; I' " come not as a furious husband, to call you " to an account of your plighted troth, and " upbraid you with the second engagement " you have contracted: I know very well, "that it was the work of your relations; I " am acquainted with all the perfecutions you " have fuffered on that score: besides, the " report of my death was spread all over "Valladolid; and you had the more reason " to believe it true, as no letter from me " affured you of the contrary: in short, I' " know in what manner you have lived fince " our cruel separation, and that necessity ra-" ther than love, has thrown you into the " arms of-" " Ah, fir! (cried I, interrupt-" ing him) why will you excuse your un-" happy wife! she is criminal, since you live! " why am I not still in that miserable situa-"tion in which I lived, before I gave my " hand to Don Ambrosio! fatal nuptials! I " should then, at least, have had the conso-" lation, in my mifery, to fee you again with-" out a blush."

" My dear Mencia! (replied Don Alvaro, " with a look that testified how much he was " affected by my tears) I do not complain; " and far from reproaching you with the folen-" did condition in which I find you, by all " my hopes I thank heaven for it: fince the " melancholy day of my departure from Val-" ladolid, fate has been always adverse, and " my life but a chain of misfortunes; and, to crown my misery, it never was in my " power to let you hear from me! Too con-" fident of your love, I incessantly represent-" ed to myself the condition to which my " fatal tenderness had reduced you. My ima-" gination painted Donna Mencia in her tears! " you was the greatest of all my misfortunes, " and fometimes, I must confess, I have look-" ed upon myself as a criminal, in having had "the good fortune to please you: I have " wished that your affections had inclined to-" wards some one of my rivals, since the pre-" ference you gave to me had cost you so " dear. Nevertheless, after seven years of " fuffering, more in love than ever, I was re-" folved to see you. I could not resist this " desire, which, at the end of a long slavery, " having an opportunity to fatisfy, I went, " in this disguise, to Valladolid, at the ha-" zard of my life; there being informed of " every thing, I came hither, and found " means to introduce myself into the family of the gardener, who has hired me to work " under him. You fee in what manner I have « con-

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"conducted myself to obtain this private in"terview; but do not imagine that my design is to trouble the felicity you enjoy, by
"remaining in this place. No! I love you
"more than myself; I have the utmost regard for your repose; and now that I have
had the melancholy satisfaction of conversing with you, will go and finish, at a dif"tance, that miserable life, which I sacrifice

" to your quiet."

"No, Don Alvaro! no! (cried I, at these words) I will not suffer you to leave me a " fecond time! I will go along with you, " and death alone shall divide us!" "Take "my advice, (faid he) and live with Don "Ambrosio; do not affociate yourself with my misfortunes, but leave me alone to sup-" port the weight of them." He faid other things to the same purpose; but the more he feemed willing to facrifice himself to my happiness, I felt myfelf the less disposed to confent to it; and when he faw me firmly refolved to follow him, he changed his tone all of a fudden, and affuming a more ferene air, faid, " Madam, fince you have still fo much " love for Don Alvaro, as to prefer his mi-" fery to the prosperity you now enjoy, let " us go and live at Betancos, at the further " end of the kingdom of Gallicia, where I " have a fecret retreat. Although my mis-" fortunes have ruined my estate, they have " not yet deprived me of friends: I have " ftill some faithful ones remaining, who have

" put me in a condition to carry you off: by " their affiftance, I have provided a coach at "Zamora, bought mules and horses, and am " accompanied by three refolute Gallicians, " armed with carabines and piftols, who now "wait for my orders at the village of Ro-"dillas. Let us therefore (added he) take " the advantage of Don Ambrosio's absence : "I will order the coach to come to the caftle-" gate, and we will fet out inftantly." I confented, Don Alvaro flew to Rodillas, and returned in a short time, with his three attendants, to carry me off from the midst of my women, who, not knowing what to think of this event, ran all away, in the utmost consternation: Inez alone was privy to it, but refused to attach her fortune to mine, because she was in love with the valet de chambre of

Don Ambrosio. - I got into the coach with Don Alvaro, carrying nothing with me, but my own cloaths, and some jewels I had before my second marriage; for I would take nothing that the marquis had given me, on that occasion. We took the road to Gallicia, without knowing if we should be so happy as to reach it, having reason to fear that Don Ambrosio, at his return, would purfue us with a great number of people and overtake us. Nevertheless, we continued our journey two days, without feeing one horseman behind us; and, in hopes that the third would pass in the same manner, were conversing with each other in great tran-200

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quility; Don Alvaro had just recounted the melancholy adventure, which had given rife to the report of his death, and how, after having been a slave five years, he had recovered his liberty; when yesterday, on the road to Leon, we met those thieves, with whom you was in company. He is the person whom they murdered, with all his attendants, and for whom these my tears are shed.

CHAP. XII.

The disagreeable manner in which Gil Blas and the lady were interrupted.

Onna Mencia having ended her relation, shed a torrent of tears, while I, letting her give free vent to her sight, wept also; so natural is it to interest one's self for the unfortunate, especially for a fine lady in distress. I was going to ask what she intended to do in the present conjuncture; and perhaps she was about to consult me on the same subject; when our conversation was interrupted by a great noise in the inn, which, in spite of us, attracted our attention. This noise was occasioned by the arrival of the corregidor followed by two alguariss and a guard, who without any ceremony entered the room where we were. A gentleman who accompanied them, approached me first, and examining my dress,

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Alguarils are attendants of justice, whose office resembles that of our bailists.

had no occasion to hesitate long, but cried, "By St. Jago! this is my individual doublet, as easy to be known again as my horse: you may apprehend this gallant on my testtimony; he is one of the thieves who have an unknown retreat somewhere in this

" country."

At this discourse, by which I understood he was the gentleman who had been robbed, and whose spoils I was unluckily in possession of, I was furprized, confounded, and difmayed! The corregidor, whose office obliged him to put a bad construction on my disorder, rather than interpret it favourably, concluded that I was not accused without reason, and prefuming that the lady might be an accomplice, ordered us to be imprisoned separately. This judge far from being one of those who assume a stern countenance, was all softness and smiles; but God knows if he was a bit the better for that; for I was no fooner commited, than he came into the jail with his two terriers, I mean the alguarils, who (not forgetting their laudable cuftom) began to rummage me in a moment. What a glorious windfall was this, for those honest gentlemen! I do not believe, that ever they got fuch a booty before: at every handful of pistoles they pulled out, I faw their eyes sparkle with joy; the corregidor in particular, was transported! "Child, (faid he, with a voice "full of meekness) we must do our duty, "but be not afraid: if thou art innocent, " thou

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" thou shalt sustain no harm." In the mean time, with all their gentleness, they emptied my pockets, and even robbed me of that which the thieves had respected, I mean my uncle's forty ducats: their greedy and indefatigable hands fearched me from head to foot, they turned me about on all sides, and even stript me to see if I had any money between my shirt and my skin. When they had dextroufly acquitted themselves in this manner, I was interrogated by the corregidor, to whom I ingenuously recounted every thing that had happened to me. He ordered my deposition to be taken in writing, and then went away with his attendants and my coin, leaving me entirely naked among straw.

"O life! (cried I, when I found myself alone in this condition) how full of capricious accidents and disappointments art thou! Since I left Oviedo, I have met with nothing but misfortunes! Scarce had I got out of one danger, when I fell into another! and when I came into this town, I was far from thinking that I should so soon become acquainted with the corregidor." While I made these vain reflections, I put on again the curfed doublet and the rest of the dress which my evil genius had lent me; then exhorting myself to take courage, "Come, Gil Blas, (faid I to myfelf) shew thy fortitude: it shall ill become thee to despair in an ordinary prison, after having put thy patience to fuch a fevere trial in the fubterranean abyss!" But alas! (added

I, in a forrowful tone) I abuse myself; how shall I escape from hence, when I am utterly deprived of the means! In effect, I had too good reason to say so; for a prisoner without money, is like a bird whose wings are clipt.

Instead of the partridge and rabbit I had bespoke, they brought to me a little brown bread and a pitcher of water, and left me to fret at leisure in a dungeon, where I remained fifteen whole days, without feeing a human creature, except the turnkey, who came every morning to renew my provision. As often as I faw him, I endeavoured to speak and enter into conversation with him, in order to divert me a little: but this venerable person made no answer to what I said; I could not extract one word from him: nay, for the most part, he came in and went out, without so much as deigning me a look. On the fixteenth day, the corregidor coming in, faid, "Thou may'ft "now give a loose to joy. I bring thee " agreeable tidings. I have ordered the lady "who was along with thee, to be conducted " to Burgos. I examined her before her de-" parture, and her answers have exculpated " thee. Thou shalt be enlarged this very day, " provided that the muleteer, with whom " (as thou fay'ft) thou camest from Penna-"flor to Cacabelos, confirms thy deposition. "He is now in Aftorga, and I have fent for "him; and if he agrees with thee, in the " adventure of the rack, I will instantly set " thee free."

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These words gave me infinite joy! I looked upon myself as already acquitted; I thanked the judge for his just and expeditious decifion, and had not quite finished my compliment, when the carrier, conducted by two foldiers, arrived: I remembered his face immediately; but he, having without doubt fold my portmanteau, and all that was in it, was afraid of being obliged to restore the money he had received for it, if he should own that he knew me; and therefore affirmed with aftonishing affurance, that far from knowing me, he had never feen me before! " Ah " traitor, (cried I) rather confess that thou " hast fold my goods; and bear witness to "the truth: look at me again. I am one of "the young people whom you threatened "with the torture, at the borough of Caca-" belos, and frightened very much." The carrier answered coldly, that I talked of an affair of which he was utterly ignorant; and as he maintained to the last, that I was unknown to him, my enlargement was deferred till another time: fo that I was obliged to arm myself with patience a-new, and resolve to regale myself still with my bread and water, and a fight of the filent turnkey-The thoughts of being unable to free myself from the claws of justice, although I was not guilty of the least crime, threw me into despair ! I wished myself again in the cavern, "Where "in the main (faid I to myself) I was less "disagreeably situated than in this dungeon : Vot. I. there there

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"there I eat and drank in plenty, converfed with the robbers, and lived in the fweet

"hope of making my escape; instead of which, notwithstanding my innocence, I

" shall perhaps think myself happily quit, to

" get out of this place, in order to be fent

" to the galleys."

CHAP. XIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was set at liberty at last; and whither be directed his course.

TAT HILE I pass'd my days in entertain-VV ing myself with these reflections, my adventures, fuch as they appeared in my deposition, spread all over the town; upon which many people, being curious to fee me, came and presented themselves, one after another, at a small chink thro' which the light was conveyed into my prison, and, after having observed me for some time, went away. I was furprized at this novelty; for fince the day of my imprisonment, I had not before feen a living foul at that window, which ferved to enlighten a court where horror reigned in filence. Gueffing from this, that I made some noise in town, I did not know whether to interpret it as a good or bad omen.

One of the first that offered themselves to my view was the little ballad-singer of Mondonedo, who, having been equally afraid of the torture, had sled as well as I.—I knew him again immediately, and, as he did not pretend

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pretend to have forgot me, we faluted one another; and falling into a long conversation, I was obliged to repeat my adventures a-new: for his part he informed me of what had happened in the inn at Cacabelos, between the carrier and the new-married wife, after we had been driven away by a panic: in a word, he acquainted me with the whole of what I have already rehearfed on that subject. Afterwards, taking leave of me for the prefent, he promised, without loss of time, to labour for my deliverance; and every body who came (as he did) thro' curiofity, feemed affected with my misfortune, and even affured me, that they would join the little balladfinger, and do all that lay in their power to procure my enlargement.

They kept their promise effectually, and spoke in my behalf to the corregidor, who no longer doubting my innocence, especially when the ballad-singer had told him what he knew of the matter, at the end of three weeks came into the prison, and said, "Gil Blas, I don't "choose to protract things: go, thou art "free, and may'st quit the prison when thou "wilt. But tell me, (pursued he) if thou "shouldst be brought to the wood in which "the subterranean retreat is, couldst thou not "find it out?" "No, sir, (I replied;) for as I went in at night, and came out before "day, it would be impossible for me to six "upon the spot." Upon this the judge with-"drew, telling me, that he was going to order

the turnkey to fet the prison-doors open for me.-In effect, the goaler came into my dungeon a moment after, with one of his men carrying a bundle of cloaths; and stripping me (with a grave and filent air) of my doublet and breeches, which were made of fine cloth, and almost new, they put me on a shabby footman's frock, and pushed me out

by the shoulders.

The joy that prisoners commonly feel in recovering their liberty, was moderated by my confusion in seeing myself so poorly equipt; and I was tempted to leave the town instantly, that I might withdraw myfelf from the eyes of the people, whose looks I could scarce endure: but my gratitude got the better of my shame: I went to thank the ballad-singer, to whom I was fo much obliged; and he could not help laughing when he faw me.-"What a strange figure you are! (said he:) "Justice I see has been done you in all her "forms."-" I do not complain of justice, " (I replied:) she is most equitable: I wish " only that all her officers were honest men. "They ought at least to have spared my "cloaths, which I think I paid for pretry " handsomely."-" I think so too (faid he;) " but they will tell you, these are formalities "which must be observed. What! do you

"think (for example) that your horse has " been restored to the right owner? not at " all; I affure you he is now actually in the

" stable of the town-clerk, where he has been

"deposited as a proof of the robbery; and " I don't believe the poor gentleman will ever " retrieve fo much as the crupper.—But let " us shift our discourse (continued he:) what " is your design? what scheme do you in-" tend to profecute at prefent?" " I want to " go to Burgos (faid I,) in order to find out " the lady I delivered, who will give me a " few pistoles, with which I will purchase " a new cassock, and repair to Salamanca, " where I will endeavour to make my Latin "turn to some advantage. All I am con-" cerned at is, that I am at some distance " from Burgos, and shall want subsistance on "the road." "I understand you (he repli-" ed:) here is my purse:-'tis, indeed, a " little low; but a ballad-finger, you know, " is not a bishop." At the same time he flipt it into my hand so chearfully, that I could not for my soul refuse the offer, such as it was. I thank'd him as much as if he had given me all the gold in Peru, and made a thousand professions of service, which I never had an opportunity to perform. Then, biding him farewel, I left the town, without having visited those other persons who had contributed to my enlargement; contenting myself with bestowing upon them, in my own thoughts a thousand benedictions.

The little ballad-singer was in the right to speak modestly of his purse, in which I found very little money: but, happily for me, I had been used two months to a very frugal

diet; and I had still some rials left, when I arrived at the borough of Ponte de Mula, which is but a little way from Burgos. Here I halted to enquire about Donna Mencia, and going into an inn, the mistress of which was a little, lean, fierce, infolent creature, I perceived at once, by the disdainful look she darted at me, that my frock was not at all to her liking; a difgust which I forgave with all my heart.—I fat down at table, where I ate fome bread and cheefe, and fwallowed a few draughts of execrable wine, which they brought for me; and during this repast, which was very well fuited to my dress, I wanted to enter into conversation with my landlady.—I begg'd her to tell me if the knew the marquis of Guardia; if his castle was far from the borough; and, in particular, if the had heard what was become of the marchioness his lady. "You ask a great many "questions," (replied she, with a scornful look:) she told me however, (tho' with a very bad grace) that the castle of Don Ambrosio was but a short league from Ponte de Mula.

When I had done eating and drinking, (it being by this time pretty late) I express'd a desire of going to rest, and bad them shew me into a bed-chamber. "A bed-chamber for you! (said the landlady, darting at me a look full of haughtiness and contempt) I have no bed-chambers for people who sup on a morsel of cheese.—All my beds are bespoke:—I expect gentlemen of impor-

" tance

"tance to lodge here to-night;—so that all I "can do for you is to quarter you in the "barn; and it won't (I suppose) be the first "time you have slept upon straw." She did not know how true she spoke; but I made no reply, and very wisely condescended to sneak into the straw, where in a very short time I slept like one who had suffered much fatigue.

CHAP. XIV.

Of bis reception at Burgos by Donna Mencia.

I Did not lie a-bed like a stuggard next morning, but went to reckon with my landlady, who seemed less proud and snapish than she had been the night before: a change that I ascribed to the presence of three honest soldiers belonging to the holy brotherhood, who conversed with her in a very familiar manner.

—They had lodged all night at the inn, and it was, doubtless, for these gentlemen of importance, that all the beds had been bespoke.

Inquiring in the borough the way to the castle whither I wanted to go, I address'd myself by accident to a man of the character of my landlord at Pennastor: not contented with answering the question I asked, he let me know that Don Ambrosio was dead three weeks ago, and that the marchioness his lady had retired into a convent at Burgos, which he named.—
I repaired immediately to that city, instead of following the road to the castle, as I formerly intended, and slying directly to the convent

where she was, begg'd the favour of the portress to tell her that a young man, just released from the goal of Aftorga, defired to speak with her. The nun went immediately to do what I defred, and returning, introduced me into a parlour, where I had not been long when I faw the widow of Don Ambrolio appear at the grate in deep mourning.

"You are welcome (faid the lady to me:) " four days ago I wrote to a person at Astor-" ga, defiring him to go to you from me, " and tell you that I should be glad to fee " you, as foon as you should be released; and "I did not doubt of your being enlarged in " a very little time, what I faid to the cor-" regidor in your behalf having been fufficient " for that purpose.—In answer to this he " wrote, that you had recovered your liberty, "but nobody knew whither you was gone; " fo that I was afraid I should never see you " again, and consequently be deprived of the " pleasure of manifesting my gratitude.-"Don't be ashamed, (added she, observing my confusion on account of appearing be-" fore her in fuch a miserable dress) let not "your present condition give you the least " uneafiness. After the important service you " have done me, I should be the most un-" grateful of all women, if I neglected to do " fomething for you: I intend to extricate " you out of the wretched fituation in which "you are: it is my duty, and I am able to " perform it.—The confiderable wealth I am « now

" now miftress of, impowering me acquit "myself towards you, without incommoding "myself.

" myfelf.

"You know (continued she) my adven-"tures, to the day on which we were both "imprisoned; and I will tell you what has " happen'd to me fince.-When the corregi-"dor of Aftorga had ordered me to be con-"ducted to Burgos, after having heard from " my mouth a faithful relation of my ftory, " I repaired to Don Ambrosio's castle, where " my return occasioned extreme surprize, tho " I was told it was too late; for the marquis, "thunder-struck at the news of my flight, " had fallen ill, and the physicians despaired " of his life. This was fresh cause for me to " complain of the rigour of my fate: never-" theless, having advertised him of my arri-" val, I entered his/chamber, and running " to his bed-fide, threw myfelf on my knees " my face bathed in tears, and my heart op-" press'd with the most afflicting grief! What " brings you hither? (faid he, when he per-" ceived me) Are you come to contemplate "your own work? Was it not sufficient for " you to deprive me of life, but you must " also have the satisfaction of being an eye-"witness of my death?"-" No, my lord, " (I replied) Inez must have told you, that "I fled with my husband; and had it not "been for the difmal accident which has " robb'd me of him, you never should have " feen me again! At the fame time I let him E 5

"know, that Don Alvaro had been murder-" ed by robbers, who afterwards carried me "into their subterranean retreat; and, in " fhort, informed him of all that had hap-" pened.-When I had done speaking, Don "Ambrosio stretched out his hand to me, " faying, with the utmost tenderness, I am " fatisfied-I cease to complain :-- why should " I reproach you! having found again a huf-" band whom you dearly loved, you aban-"doned me to follow his fortune: ought I " to blame you for fuch a conduct? No, ma-" dam, I should have been in the wrong to "murmur at it, therefore would not fuffer "you to be purfued: I revered the facred "rights of your ravisher, and even your in-" clination towards him.—In fine, I do you " justice; and, by your return, you have re-"trieved all my tenderness! Yes, my dear " Mencia, your presence overwhelms me with " joy! but alas! it will not last long. I feel " my last hour approaching! Scarce are you " restored to my arms, when I must bid you " an eternal adieu!" At these affecting words, my tears redoubled! I felt and expressed an immoderate affliction! I question if the death of Don Alvaro, whom I adored, had cost me more fighs! Don Ambrosio's presage of his own death, was but too true: he expired next day; and I remained mistress of a considerable estate which he had settled upon me, at our marriage. I intend to make no bad use of it. The world shall not see me (though I

am

am still young) throw myself into the arms of a third husband: for besides, that I think such conduct would be inconsistent with the virtue and delicacy of my sex, I own, I have no longer any relish for the world; but design to end my days in this convent, and become a benefactress to it.

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Such was the discourse of Donna Mencia, who taking out a purse from under her robe, put it in my hand, faying, "Here are a hun-" dred ducats, which I give you only to buy " cloaths: come and fee me again, after you "have equipped yourself; for I do not in-" tend to confine my gratitude within fuch " narrow bounds." I gave the lady a thoufand thanks; and fwore I would not depart from Burgos, without taking leave of her: after this oath, which I had no intention to break, I went in quest of an inn, and going into the first I perceived, demanded a room, telling the landlord (to prevent the bad opinion he might conceive of me, from the shabby frock) that notwithstanding my appearance, I was in a condition to pay handsomely for my lodging. At these words, the inn-keeper, whose name was Majuelo, naturally a great wag, furveying me from top to bottom, anfwered dryly, with a farcastic sneer, there was no occasion for such an assurance, to persuade him, that I should spend like a prince in his house: for he discovered something noble in me, by my drefs; and in short, did not doubt that I was a gentleman of a very independant F. 6 fortune.

fortune. I could easily perceive that the rafcal rallied me, and in order to put an end to his witticisms, shewed my purse. I even counted my ducats on a table before him, and observing that my coin altered his opinion very much in my favour; defired he would recommend me to a taylor. "You had bet-" ter (faid he) fend for a broker, who will " bring along with him all kinds of apparel " ready made, and fit you in a trice." I approved of his advice, and refolved to follow it: but the day being near a close, deferred my purchase till next morning, and thought of nothing but making a good supper, to indemnify me for the forry meals I had made fince my deliverance from the cavern.

CHAP. XV.

Of the manner in which Gil Blas dressed himself

—Of the new present he received from the lady, and the equipage in which he departed from Burgos.

THEY brought for my supper a huge fricassee, of sheep-trotters, which I picked to the bones; and having drank in porportion, betook myself to rest. As I had the convenience of a good bed, I was in hopes of enjoying a sound sleep: but for all that, could not close my eyes; my thoughts being ingrossed, in determining upon the dress I was to choose. "What must I do? (said I to myself) prosecute my first design, buy a "cassock,

" caffock, and go to Salamanca in quest of " a tutor's place: But why should I take the

" habit of a licentiate? Am. I ambitious of

" confecrating myself to the church? or have

" I the least bias that way? No. I feel my-

" felf (on the contrary) quite otherwise in-" clined: I will turn gentleman, and endea-

" vour to make my fortune in the world."

Having resolved upon this, I longed for day with the utmost impatience; and no sooner perceived the glimple of light, than I got up, and made fo much noise in the inn, that I wakened all those who were asleep. I called the waiters, who were still a-bed, and who loaded me with curses by way of answer. They were obliged to rife, however, and I gave them no quarter, until one of them had gone for a broker, who foon appeared, followed by two apprentices, carrying each a great green bag on his shoulders. He saluted me with great civility, faying, "Signior Ca-" valier, you are very happy in having ap-" plied to me, rather than to any other body. "I don't choose to disparage my brethren. "God forbid that I should prejudice their " reputation in the least! but between you " and me, there's no conscience among them.

"They are all as abandoned as Jews. I " am the only honest broker in town. I con-

" fine myself to a moderate profit; being

" fatisfied with a pound in the shilling-I

mean, a shilling in the pound. Thank ow transmitted it is "heaven!

"heaven! I deal upon the square with all mankind."

The broker, after this preamble, which I took for gospel, ordered his men to untie the bundles, and shewed me suits of all colours. Some which were of plain cloth I rejected with disdain, as being too mean; but they made me try one which seemed to have been made exactly for my shape, and which struck my fancy, although fomewhat worn. It confifted of a doublet with flashed sleeves, a pair of breeches, and a cloak, the whole of blue velvet embroidered with gold. Fixing on this, I cheapened it, and the broker perceiving I was bent upon it, observed that I had an excellent tafte. "Odds bodikins! (cried he,) one may fee you know what you are about. "I can tell you, that fuit was made for one of the greatest lords in the kingdom, who never had it three times on his back. Examine the velvet, nothing can be finer; and " as for the embroidery, you must confess " the work is exquisite." What will you sell it for? (faid I;) he answered, "Sixty ducats: " I am a rogue if I have not refused the " money." The alternative was plain. I offered five and forty, which might be about double the value. "Mr. What d'ye call 'um, " (replied the broker with an air of indif-" ference) I never exact too much. I am al-" ways at a word. Here (continued he, " shewing me some of those I had refused) buy this. I'll fell it a pennyworth." This was

was only to excite my desire of purchasing that which I had cheapened; and accordingly, imagining that he would not abate one farthing of his price, I counted into his hand the sixty ducats. When he saw me part with them so easily, I believe, in spite of his boasted honesty, he wished that he had asked a great deal more: pretty well satisfied, however, with having gained nineteen shillings in the pound, he went away, with his apprentices, whom I had

not forgotten.

Having now a very handsome cloak, doublet, and breeches, I spent the rest of the morning in providing other necessaries. I bought a hat, filk stockings, shoes, linen, and a sword: after which, having dreffed, what infinite pleasure had I in beholding myself so well equipped! My eyes (to use the expression) could not fufficiently glut themselves with my attire! Never peacock contemplated his own feathers with more fatisfaction. That very day I made my fecond visit to Donna Mencia, who still received me very kindly, and thanked me again for the fervice I had done her. On that score, many compliments passed on both fides: after which, wishing me all happiness, she bade me farewel, and retired without giving me any thing but a ring worth thirty pistoles, which she desired me to keep in remembrance of her.

I looked very blank with my ring, having laid my account with receiving a much more confiderable present, and trudged back to my lodgings

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lodgings in a brown fludy, little fatisfied with the lady's generosity. But just as I entered the inn, a man who had followed me all the way, came in likewise, and laying aside the cloak in which he was muffled up, discovered a great bag under his arm. At the apparition of this bag, which had all the air of being full of money, I, as well as some other people who were present, stared with our eyes wide open; and I thought I heard the voice of an angel, when the man laying the bag upon a table, pronounced, "Signior Gil Blas, here is some-"thing that my lady marchioness has sent you." I made many profound bows to the bearer whom I overwhelmed with civility: and he was no fooner gone, than I darted upon the bag, like a hawk upon his prey; and carrying it to my chamber, untied it, without loss of time, and found in it a thousand ducats. I had just made an end of counting them, when my landlord, who had heard what the porter faid, came in to fee the contents of the bag. Thunderstruck at the fight of my coin spread upon the table, "Zounds, (cried he) what a " vast sum of money is here! You must be " a devil among the women, (added he, with " a fatirical fmile) for although you have not " been four and twenty hours in Burgos, " you have a marchioness already under con-tribution."

This discourse did not disgust me; I was tempted to leave Majuelo in his mistake, which already gave me a sensible pleasure: so that

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that I do not wonder that young fellows love to be thought men of intrigue. My inno-cence, however, got the better of my vanity: I undeceived my landlord, and recounted the story of Donna Mencia, to which he listened with great attention. I then disclosed the state of my affairs, and as he seemed to interest himself in my behalf, begged the affiftance of his advice. Having mused a while, "Signior "Gil Blas, (faid he) I have a regard for you; " and fince you have confidence enough in " me, to unbosom yourself in this manner, "I will without flattery, tell you what I "think you are fittest for. As you feem de-" figned by nature for the court, I advise you " to go thither and attach yourself to some " grandee: but be fure either to meddle in "his concerns, or enter into his pleasures; " otherwise you will lose your time. I know the great. They look upon the zeal and " attachment of an honest man, as nothing " at all; and mind only fuch as are necessary " to them. But you have another resource: " (continued he) you are young and hand" fome; and these qualifications alone, with-" out the least glimpse of understanding, are " more than sufficient to captivate a rich "widow, or some fine lady unhappily married: " if love ruins gentlemen of fortune, it often " maintains those who have none. It is my " advice therefore, that you go to Madrid; " but you must by no means appear without " attendants: they judge there, as in other " places,

" places, by appearance; and you will be confidered only, in proportion to the figure

" you make. I will recommend a fervant to

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" you—a faithful domestic—a prudent, sober fellow—in one word, a man of my own

" making. Purchase a couple of mules, one

" for yourself, and another for him, and ser

" out as foon as possible."

This advice was too much to my own taste to be neglected: I therefore next morning, bought two handsome mules, and hired the servant he had recommended: he was a fellow thirty years old, of a simple, religious aspect, born, as he said, in the kingdom of Galicia; his name was Ambrose de Lamela; far from being selfish like other servants, he made no words about his wages; but assured me, he would be contented with what in my goodness I should think proper to bestow. Having provided myself likewise with boots, and a portmanteau to hold my linen and cash, I cleared with my landlord, and early next morning, set out from Burgos, on my way to Madrid.

CHAP. XVI.

Shews that we ought not to trust too much to prosperity.

WE slept the first night at Duennas, and arriving at Valladolid, the day following about four a clock in the afternoon, alighted at an inn, which seemed one of the best in town. I left the care of my mules to my lacquey,

lacquey, and going up stairs into a chamber whither I ordered a fervant of the house to bring my portmanteau, felt myself a little fatigued, and without taking off my boots, threw myself on the bed, where I fell asleep insensibly. It being almost night when I waked, I called for Ambrose, who was gone out, but returned in a little time; when I ask'd where he had been, he replied with a pious air that he was just come from church, where he had been to return thanks to heaven, for having preserved him from all evil accidents on the road from Burgos even unto Valladolid: I approved of his conduct, and bade him order a

fowl to the fire for my supper.

At that very instant, my landlord entered with a taper in his hand, lighting in a lady who feemed more handsome than young, and very richly dreffed: she was squired by an old usher, and a little blackamoor carried her train. I was not a little furprifed when this lady, after having made a low courtefy, asked if I was not Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, to which I had no fooner answered in the affirmative, than she quitted her attendant, and embraced me with a transport of joy, that redoubled my aftonishment. "Blessed be heaven " (cried the) for this meeting! You are the " person, Signior Cavalier, you are the very " person I was in quest of !" At this preamble, I thought of the parasite at Pennastor; and began to look upon the lady as a downright bite; when I was induced to think more favourably

favourably of her, by what followed. "I am (added she) cousin-germain to Donna Mencia of Mosquera, who has been so much obliged to you; and received a letter from her this morning, importing that having heard you was going to Madrid, I would oblige her very much, by treating you handsomely, provided you should pass this way: I have been running all over the town these two hours, inquiring from inn to inn, about all the strangers that arrived; and by the description your landlord gave me of you, I imagined you might be the deliverer of my cousin. Ah! now that I have found you (continued she) you shall see how fensible I am of the services you have done my family, and in particular, to my dear cousin! You shall come to my house immediately, (if you please) where you will be more conveniently lodged than here." would have excused myself, by representing to the lady, that I should incommode her family; but there was no resisting her importunities: there was a coach waiting for us at the door, in which she took care to see my portmanteau fecured; " because (said she) there are a great " many rogues in Valladolid:" an observation I found but too true! In short, I went into the coach along with her and her fquire, and fuffered myself to be carried away from the inn, to the mortification of the landlord, who by these means found himself disappointed of the money which he expected I would fpendat his house.

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Our coach having rolled fome time, stoped at a pretty large house, where we alighted and went up stairs into a handsome apartment lighted by twenty or thirty wax-candles. We passed through a good many servants, of whom the lady asked if Don Raphael was come yet; and was answered in the negative; upon which, addressing herself to me, " Signior Gil " Blas (faid she) I have a brother whom I " expect this evening from a villa we have " two leagues from this: he will be very " agreeably furprifed to find in this house, a " gentleman to whom our whole family is fo " much indebted." She had fcarce spoke these words, when we heard a noise below, which (we were told) was occasioned by the arrival of Don Raphael; and that cavalier, who was a young man of a good shape and genteel address, appeared soon after. "Bro-" ther, e(faid the lady to him) I am extremely " glad of your return! you will affift me in " doing honour to Signior Gil Blas of San-" tillane; to whom we can never enough " shew our gratitude for what he has done in " behalf of our kinfwoman Donna Mencia: " there (added she, giving him a letter) you " may read what she has wrote on the sub-" ject." Don Raphael opening the letter, pronounced these words aloud geneleman, who has performed Akth E. important performed the E. important person to dervice or the performance of the color to the person to t

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My dear Camilla,

SIGNIOR Gil Blas of Santillane, who preserved my honour as well as my life, has set out for court; and as he will, doubtless, pass thro' Valladolid, I conjure you by the blood, and still more, by the friendship that unites us, to shew him all the respect in your power, and detain him some time in your family. I flatter myself, that you will give me that satisfaction, and that my deliverer will receive all manner of civility from you and my cousin Don Raphael. At Burgos, your affectionate kinswoman,

Donna Mencia.

" How! (cried Don Raphael) is this the ec gentleman to whom my cousin owes her " honour and life? ah! heaven be praifed for " this happy rencounter!" So faying, he approached, and clasping me in his arms, "What " joy do I feel, (faid he) in embracing Sig-" nior Gil Blas of Santillane! my coufin the " marchioness had no occasion to lay such in-" junctions upon us: it would have been fufse ficient to let us know, that you was to pass " through Valladolid; my fifter and I know " very well how to behave ourselves towards " a gentleman, who has performed fuch an " important piece of service to the person for " whom, of all our family, we have the most " tender regard." I answered, as well as I could,

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could, to these compliments, which were followed by a great many more of the fame nature, and interspersed with a thousand careffes: after which, perceiving that my boots were still on, they ordered their fervants to pull them off; and we went into another room, where, the cloth being laid, the gentleman, lady and I fat down to supper; during which, they faid a thousand obliging things to me: not a word escaped me, which they did not repeat as an admirable stroke of wit; and it was furprizing to fee how attentive they were in presenting me with all the daintiest morfels. Don Raphael drank frequently to the health of Donna Mencia, in which I followed his example; and I imagined that Camilla, who did us justice, sometimes threw certain very fignificant looks at me. I even observed that fhe chose proper opportunities of so doing, as if she had been afraid that her brother would perceive it. This was enough to perfuade me of the lady's being smitten; and I flattered myself with the hope of profiting by that difcovery, during my fhort stay at Valladolid. This hope induced me to yield, without difficulty, to their intreaties, when they requested me to spend a few days with them. They thanked me for my complaifance, and the joy which Camilla discovered, on this occasion, confirmed me in the opinion, that I had found the way to her heart.

Don Raphael seeing me determined to stay with him some time, proposed to carry me to

his country house, of which he gave me a magnificent description; and talked of the pleasures he would there entertain me with. "Sometimes (faid he) we will take the di-" version of hunting, sometimes that of fish-" ing; and if you love walking, we have de-" lightful woods and gardens in abundance: " besides, we shall not want good company; " and, on the whole, I hope you will not " grow melancholy among us." I accepted his offer, and it was determined that we should go to this charming place the very next day. Having projected this agreeable scheme, we rose from table; and Don Raphael embracing me, in a transport of joy, faid, "Signior Gil "Blas, I will leave my fifter to entertain you, " while I go immediately to give necessary " orders, and advertise those people whom I " intend shall be of the party." So saying, he went out of the room, and I continued converfing with the lady, who did not contradict, by her discourse, the soft glances she had thrown at me. She took hold of my hand, and looking at my ring, faid, "You " have got a pretty diamond enough, but it " is a very small one. Are you a connoisseur " in ftones?" When I answered in the negagative, " I am forry for it, (faid she) for you " might have told me what this is worth." With these words, she shewed me a large ruby on her finger, and, while I examined it, added, " An uncle of mine, who was gover-" nor of the Spanish colonies in the Philipes pine

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" pine isles, made me a present of this ruby, " which the jewellers here in Valladolid value " at three hundred pistoles." " I believe it " is well worth the money (faid I) for it is " extremely beautiful." " Since you are " pleased with it, (she replied) I will make " an exchange with you." And immediately she pulled off my ring, and put her own on my little finger. Having made this exchange, which I looked upon as a genteel way of making a prefent, Camilla squeezed my hand, and looked at me in the most languishing manner; then starting up abruptly, wished me good night, and withdrew in great confusion, as if she had been ashamed of disclosing her fentiments.

Novice as I was in gallantry, I knew well enough how to interpret this precipitate retreat in my favour, and concluded that I should pass my time very agreeably at their villa. Full of this flattering idea, and the prosperous condition of my affairs, I locked myself in the chamber where I was to lie, after having ordered my fervant to come and wake me early in the morning; but instead of going to rest, I gave a loose to those agreeable reflections, which my portmanteau, that lay on the table, and my ruby, inspired. Thank heaven! faid I to myself, if I have been unfortunate, I am no longer fo. On one side a thouland ducats; a ring, worth three hundred pistoles, on the other! My finances will not be exhausted in a hurry! I see now that Ma-VOL. I.

juelo hid not flatter me. I shall inflame the hearts of a thousand ladies at Madrid, since I have made such an easy conquest of Camilla? The favours of that generous lady presented themselves to my imagination, with all their charms; and I anticipated the diversions that Don Raphael prepared for me at his house in the country. In the midst of these pleasing images, however, sleep did not fail to shed his poppies over me; so that, finding myself

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droufy, I undressed, and went to bed.

Next morning, when I awaked, I perceived that it was already late, and was a good deal furprized, that my valet did not appear in confequence of the order I had given him over night. Ambrofe, faid I to myfelf, my faithful Ambrofe, is either at church, or very lazy to-day. But I foon loft that opinion of him, and conceived one much worfe; for getting up, and missing my portmanteau, I tuspected him of having stole it in the night. For further information, I opened the chamber-door, and called the hypocrite several times; at last, an old man hearing me, came and said, "What would you please to have, "Signior? all your people departed from my

" Signior? all your people departed from my house long before day." "How! (cried

" I) your house! am I not at present in the

" house of Don Raphael?" "I don't know

" who that gentleman is, (said he) but you are in furnished lodgings, and I am the

" landlord: last night, an hour before your

" arrival, the lady who fupped along with

" you came hither, and hired this apartment for a great lord, who, she said, travelled incognito; and even paid me before-hand."

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I was no longer in the dark; I gueffed the characters of Camilla and Don Raphael, and concluded that my fervant being perfectly well acquainted with my affairs, had fold me to these sharpers. Instead of ascribing this unlucky adventure to myself; and considering that it would not have happened to me, had I not been so indiscreet as to unbosom myself unnecessarily to Majuelo; I imputed all to innocent fortune, and curfed my fate a thoufand times. The owner of the house, to whom I recounted the adventure, which perhaps, he knew as well as I did, seemed affected with my forrow, condoled me, and protested that he was very much mortified to find that fuch a scene had passed in his house: but I believe, notwithstanding all his professions, he was as much concerned in the trick as my landlord at Burgos, to whom, however, I have always attributed the honour of the invention.

CHAP. XVII.

How Gil Blas bestowed himself after the adventure of the ready-furnished lodging.

Having heartily bewailed my misfortune, I confidered, that instead of giving way to forrow, I ought to animate myself against mischance; and summoning all my courage

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100 The ADVENTURES of

to my affistance, said to myself, while I put on my cloaths, by way of consolation, I am happy in that the rogues have not also carried off my apparel, and some ducats which I have still in my purse: I gave them credit for this piece of civility, and fold my boots, which they had been generous enough to leave likewife, to my landlord, for one third of the money they had cost me. Then taking my leave of the ready-furnished lodging; without having occasion, thank God! for any body to carry my baggage; the first thing I did, was to go and fee whether or not my mules were at the inn, where I alighted the preceding night; though I was of Opinion that Ambrose had not left them there; and I wish to God, my opinion of him had been always as just! for they told me, he had taken care to fetch them away that very evening: wherefore, laying my account with having feen the last of them, as well as of my portmanteau, I stroled about the streets in a melancholy manner, musing on what should be my next course. I was tempted to return to Burgos, and have recourse to Donna Mencia once more; but when I reflected, that in fo doing I should abuse the generosity of the lady, and, at the fame time, be looked upon as a booby, I relinquished that thought, swearing I should, for the future, be upon my guard against women; and I believe at that time, I should have mistrusted the chaste Susanna. I cast my eyes from time to time, upon my ring, and when I conI considered that it was a present from Camilla, sighed with vexation. Alas! thought I, though I am no connoisseur in rubies, I have too good reason to know those who exchange them; and I believe it is not necessary that I should go to a jeweller, to be persuaded that I am a sool.

I was willing, however, to be informed of the worth of my ring, and accordingly shewed it to a lapidary, who valued it at three ducats. Though I was not furprized at this estimation, I wished the niece of the governor of the Philippine isles at the devil, or rather, only repeated the wish. As I came out of the jeweller's house, a young fellow, who was passing, stopt to consider me. Not being able to recollect him at first, although I had formerly been intimate with him, " How, "Gil Blas! (faid he) do you pretend igno-" rance of me, or have two years altered the " fon of barber Nunnez fo much, that you " do not know him? don't you remember " Fabricius, your companion and school-fel-" low, with whom you have so often disput-" ed, at the house of doctor Godinez, upon " predicables and metaphyfical degrees?"

I remembred him before he had done speaking, and we embraced one another with transport. "My dear friend (continued he how glad am I to meet thee! I can't express the joy I feel.---But, (added he, with an air of furprize) what do I fee! egad! thou art dressed like a prince! a fine sword, filk

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"flockings, doublet and cloak of velvet em"broidered with filver!---Odd's nigers! this
"fmells strong of intrigues! I'll hold a wa"ger, that thou sharest the bounty of some
"liberal old lady." "You are mistaken,
"(faid I) for my affairs are not so flourishing as
"you imagine." "Pshaw, pshaw, (replied
"he) you affect to be a close fellow; that
"fine ruby on your singer, Mr. Gil Blas,
"whence comes that, I pray you?" "It
"comes (said I) from an arrant jade. Fa"bricius, my dear Fabricius, far from being
"in vogue among the women at Valladolid,
"know that I am a most ridiculous dupe."

I pronounced these last words so ruefully, that Fabricius was convinced of my having been imposed upon, in some shape or other; and pressed me to tell him what were my reafons for complaining of the fair-fex. I was eafily prevailed upon to fatisfy his curiofity; but as my story was pretty long, and, besides, we had no intention of parting in a hurry, we went into a public house, that we might converse together moreat ourease; and there, while we breakfasted, I recounted to him all that had happened to me, fince my departure from Oviedo. He thought my adventures were extremely odd, and after having affured me, that he very much sympathized with me, in my present unlucky situation, said, "We " must console ourselves, my child, as well " as we can, for all the misfortunes of life. "When a man of spirit is unlucky, he waits is a-

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"with patience for a more favourable con-"juncture. One should never, as Cicero says, "let himself be so much dejected as to forget "that he is a man. For my own part, I am " of that very disposition: my misfortunes " have not been able to overwhelm me, be-" cause I am always above the caprice of fate. " For instance, I loved a girl of some fashion " at Oviedo, who had a tendre for me; I " asked her in marriage, of her father, and "he refused me. Another, on this occasion, "would have died of grief: but I (admire "the force of genius) carried off the dear "creature: as she was passionate, thought-" less and vain, pleasure, of consequence, al-"ways determined her to the prejudice of "duty. I led her a dance, for fix months, "through the kingdom of Gallicia, from "whence, as I had given her a taste for tra-" velling, she was desirous of going to Portu-"gal; but thought proper to chuse a new " conductor: here was another subject of de-" spair; but for all that, I did not fink un-"der the weight of it, and wifer than Me-" nelaus, instead of declaring war against the " Paris who had stole my Helen, I thought " myself very much obliged to him, for hav-"ing rid my hands of her. Afterwards " being unwilling to return to the Asturias, I that I might avoid all expostulation with "justice, I advanced into the kingdom of "Leon, spending, from town to town, the " remainder of the money I had carried off 104 The ADVENTURES of

" with my infanta; for we had quitted Ovi-" edo with the full hand; and arrived at Pa-" lencia with a folitary ducat, out of which " I was obliged to buy a pair of shoes; so " that the remaining part could not last much " longer: my fituation became very perplex-"ing, and I was even reduced to a very strict " regimen: there was no time to be loft, I " refolved to go to fervice, and hired myfelf " to a great woollen-draper, whose fon was " an accomplished rake. Here, though I " found an afylum against hunger, I was not " a little embaraffed: for the father ordered " me to be a fpy upon the fon; and the fon " intreated me to affift him in cheating the " father. Being obliged to determine, I pre-" ferred the intreaty to the command; and "that preference cost me my place. I after-" wards went into the service of an old pain-"ter, who would have taught me, through " friendship, the principles of his art; in the " demonstration of which, however, I was " almost famished. This gave me a disgust " for painting, and a difrelish for Palencia, " at the same time; and coming to Vallado-" lid, by the greatest good fortune in the " world, I got into the family of one of the directors of the hospital, where I now live " perfectly happy. Signior Manuel Ordon-" nez, my master, is a man of profound " piety, who walks with his eyes always fixed " on the ground, and a large rosary in his e hand. They fay, that from his youth, hav"ing nothing in view but the funds of the poor, he attached himself to them with indefatigable zeal; and accordingly his cares have not been ill requited; every thing prospers with him. What a blessing it is, that he has made himself rich, in manag-

" ing the affairs of the poor!"

Fabricius having harangued in this manner, "I am very glad (faid I to him) to find " thee fo well fatisfied with thy condition: "but, between you and me, I think you " might play a more honourable part in the "world." "You are mistaken, Gil Blas, " (answered he) there is no situation in life " more agreeable to one of my humour, than "that which I now enjoy: the employment " of a lacquey is troublesome, I own, to a " filly fellow; but to a lad of spirit, it is full " of charms. A superior genius that goes " to service, does not confine himself to the "menial circumstances of his duty, like a "fimpleton: he goes into a family to com-" mand rather than obey; he begins by study-"ing his master, he accommodates himself " to his foibles, gains his confidence, and "then leads him by the nofe. 'Tis thus that "I have behaved towards my director. " foon discovered his hypocrify, and perceiv-" ed that he wanted to pass for a person of " great fanctity: I pretended to be his dupe; " that costs nothing. I did more, I imitated " him, and acting in his presence, the same " farce that he plays before others, I deceived " the

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"the deceiver, and am, by degrees, become his fac totum. Under his auspices, I hope one day to be concerned in the affairs of the poor; in which case, I may chance to make my fortune too, for I find myself as well inclined towards them, as he can be

" for his heart."

"These are fine hopes, (replied I) my dear "Fabricius: I congratulate thee upon thy " prospect; and for my own part, will have " recourse to my former scheme: convert " my embroidered habit into a caffock, re-" pair to Salamanca, and lifting myfelf un-"der the banners of the university, perform the office of a tutor." "A fine project " truly! (cried Fabricius) an agreeable whim! "what a fool wouldft thou be, to turn pe-"dant at thy age! doeft thou know, wretch! " what thou art about to do? Soon as thou " shalt be employed, the whole family will " have their eyes on thee, and all thy actions. " will be fcrupuloufly examined: thou must " be eternally under constraint, cloath thy-" felf with hypecrify, and appear possessed of " every virtue. Thou wilt not have a mo-" ment to bestow upon thy pleasures. Like " a perpetual censor of thy pupil, thou must " pass the day in teaching him Latin, and in " rebuking him, when he shall fay or do any "thing amis: and after so much labour and " constraint, what will be the fruit of thy cares? " If the little gentleman wants capacity, it " will be faid, thou hast not given him good " educane

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" education; and his parents will turn thee " away, without any recompence, perhaps, " even without paying thy appointments. " Don't therefore talk to me of a preceptor's " post, which is like a benefice with cure of "fouls: but commend me to the employ-" ment of a lacquey, which is a simple bene-"fice, encumbered with no charge. When " a master has vices, a superior genius in his " fervice will flatter them, and often turn "them to its advantage. A footman lives in " a good family, without the least disquiet; " for after having eaten and drank his belly-" full, he sleeps like the son of a lord, and " gives himself no trouble about either baker " or butcher.

"I should never ha' done, child, (continued he) was I to recount all the advantages of sootmen. Take my advice, Gil Blas, quit, for ever, the design of becoming tutor, and followmy example." "Yes; but, Fabricius, (said I) one does not always meet with directors; and if I should resolve to turn lacquey, I should, at least, chuse to be well settled." "Oh! you are in the right, (said he) that shall be my business: I will insure thee a good place, if it was for no other reason, than to snatch a pretty fellow from the university."

The approaching mifery with which I was threatened, and the air of satisfaction that appeared in Fabricius, persuading me more than his reasons, I determined to go to service:

whereupon leaving the public house, my companion said, "I will conduct you to the house "of a person, who is consulted by almost all "the footmen out of place: he has spies, "who inform him of what happens in all families; he knows where servants are wanted, and keeps an exact register not only of the vacant places, but even of the good and bad qualities of masters: he is one who was formerly a friar in some convent or other; and, in short, 'twas he who recommended me to the place I now enjoy."

While we converfed about fuch a fingular office of intelligence, the fon of barber Nunnez carried me into a blind alley, and we entered a little house, where we found a man about fifty years old, writing at a table. We faluted him very respectfully; but whether he was naturally proud, or accustomed to see lacquies and coachmen only, he had contracted an habit of receiving people cavalierly, and did not rife from his feat, but contented himfelf with making a flight inclination of the head. He looked hard at me, however, and I could eafily perceive he was very much furprized that a young man dreffed in embroidered velvet, should want to turn valet; he had more reason to think I was come to be provided with one: but he did not continue long in suspence, with regard to my intention; for Fabricius accosting him at once, faid, "Signior Arias de Londonna, give me " leave to present one of my best friends to you:

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"you: he is a young man of a good family, " whom misfortunes have reduced to the ne-" ceffity of going to fervice. Pray inform " him of a good place, and depend upon his " gratitude." "Gentlemen, (answered Ari-" as coldly) this is the manner of you all. " before you are fixed, you make the finest " promises in the world, but once you are "well fettled, you think no more of them." " How! (replied Fabricius) do you complain " of me? have not I done honourably by " you?" "You might have done better still, " (faid Arias) your place is worth a clerk's "employment; and you have paid me, as if "I had introduced you to the house of an " author." Here I interposed, and told Signior Arias, that, to shew him I was not ungrateful, my acknowledgement should precede his fervice; at the fame time, taking out two ducats, I put them into his hand; with a promife, that I would not stop there, provided I should find myself in a good family.

He feemed pleased with my behaviour, and said he loved to be treated in that manner: "There are (continued he) excellent posts va"cant, which I will mention in order, that "you may chuse one that is to your liking." So saying, he put on his spectacles, opened a register, which lay on the table, turned over some leaves, and began to read as follows: "A lacquey is wanted for captain Torbellino, "a passionate, cruel, whimsical man, who "grumbles incessantly, swears, beats, and com"monly

"monly maims, his fervants." "Let us " pass on to another, (cried I, at that pic-"ture) that captain is not to my taste." Arias fmiled at my vivacity, and proceeded in this manner: "Donna Manuela of Sandoval, " a superannuated widow, full of peevishness " and caprice, has, at present, never a foot-" man: fhe keeps but one for ordinary, and "him never a whole day. There has been " one livery fuit in the house these ten years, "which ferves all valets who enter, of what " fize and fhape foever they may be: but it " may be faid they only try it on; for it is "fill as good as new, although it has been " worn by two thousand lacquies. Doctor "Alvar Fannez, a physician and chymist, " wants a fervant: his domesticks are well fed, "handsomely entertained, and have, more-" over, great wages; but he tries experiments " upon them, with his medicines, and there " are often vacant places in his house." "Oh! I believe it, (cried Fabricius, laugh-

"Oh! I believe it, (cried Fabricius, laugh"ing) upon my conscience, you shew us abundance of fine places." "Have patience
(said Arias de Londonna) we have not yet
done; there are some that, I am sure, will
please you." Then he continued to read
in these terms. "Donna Alsonsa de Solis,
an old devotee, who spends two thirds of
the day at church, and insists upon her sootman's being always along with her, has
not had a lacquey these three weeks. The
licentiate Sedillo, an old canon of the chap-

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" ter of this city, yesterday, in the evening, " turned away his footman." "Halt there, "Signior Arias de Londonna, (cried Fabri-" cius, in this place) we will flick to this last " post. The licentiate Sedillo is one of my " master's friends, with whom I am perfectly "well acquainted: I know that he has for "housekeeper an old devotee called Dame " Jacinta, who disposes of every thing in the "house: it is one of the best families in "Valladolid, for a fervant who loves a quiet "life and good chear: befides, the canon is "old and infirm, very much subject to the " gout, and will foon make his will; fo that "there is room to hope for a good legacy. "What a charming prospect for a footman! "Gil Blas, (added he, turning towards me) " let us lose no time, my lad, but go instant-" ly to the house of the licentiate, where I "will myself present you, and answer for thy character." At these words, for fear of losing such a fair opportunity, we took our leave, in a hurry, of Signior Arias, who affured me for my money, that if I should be baulked of this place, I might depend upon his recommending me to one as good.

The End of the FIRST BOOK.



THE

ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS of Santillane. BOOK II.

CHAP. I.

Fabricius conducts Gil Blas, and introduces him to the licentiate Sedillo. The situation of this canon. A description of his housekeeper.

TE were so much afraid of coming too late, that we made but one leap from the alley to the house of the old licentiate. We knocked at the door, which was opened by a girl ten years old, who passed for the housekeeper's niece, in spite of scandal; and asking if the canon could be spoke with, Dame Jacinta appeared: she was a person already arrived at the age of discretion, but still handsome; and, in particular, I admired the freshness of her complexion. She wore

wore a long gown of coarse stuff, with a large leathern girdle, from one side of which hung a bunch of keys, and from the other a rosary of great beads. As soon as we perceived her, we bowed with prosound respect, and she returned the salute very civilly, but with a modest deportment and downcast eyes.

" Having understood (faid my comrade to " her) that master licentiate Sedillo has oc-" casion for an honest valet, I am come to " present one, with whom, I hope, he will " be fatisfied." The housekeeper, at these words, lifting her eyes, furveyed me with attention, and, not being able to reconcile my embroidery with the discourse of Fabricius, asked if it was I who wanted the vacant place. "Yes, (faid the fon of Nunnez) it is this " young man, who, notwithstanding his ap-" pearance, has met with misfortunes that " oblige him to go to fervice. But he will " foon forget his mishaps, (added he, with " an infinuating air) if he has the happiness " to come into this family, and live with the " virtuous Jacinta, who deserves to be house-" keeper to the patriarch of the Indies." At these words, this pious governante moved her eyes from me, to consider the polite person who spoke, and, struck with his features, which were not altogether unknown to her, " I have (faid she) a confused notion of hav-" ing feen you somewhere! pray affist my " recollection." " Chaste Jacinta, (answered

" Fabricius) I am proud of having attracted

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"your notice: I have been twice in this house, "with my master Signior Manuel Ordonnez, director of the hospital." Ha! you're in the right, (replied the housekeeper) I remember it very well, and recollect your face. Ah! fince you belong to Signior Ordonnez, you must be a lad of worth and honesty: your place proclaims your virtue; and this young man could not have a better recommendation. Come, (added fhe) I will bring you to speak with Signior Sedillo, who, I believe will be very glad

" to have a fervant of your prefenting."

We followed her accordingly. The canon lodged on the ground-floor, which confifted of four rooms well wainscotted; in one of which, fhe defired us to wait a little, while she went into the next, where the licentiate was. After she had staid with him some time, in order to give him his cue, she came and told us, that we might go in. We perceived the old goutified canon buried as it were, in an elbow-chair, with pillows under his head and arms, and his legs supported on a large down cushion. While we approached him, we did not spare bows; and Fabricius being still spokesman, not only repeated what he had faid of me to the housekeeper, but likewife extolled my merit, and enlarged, chiefly, on the honour which I had acquired in philosophical disputes, while I was with doctor Godinez; as if it was necessary, that a canon's footman should be a profound philofopher.

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fopher. Nevertheless, this fine elogium that he bestowed on me, did not fail to cast a mist before the eyes of the licentiate, who observing, besides, that I was not disagreeable to Dame Jacinta, said to my recommender, "Friend, I take into my service the young "man whom thou hast brought. I am sa-"tissied, and conceive a favourable opinion of his morals, since he is presented by a "domestic of my good friend Signior Or-"donnez."

As foon as Fabricius faw that I was engaged, he made a low bow to the canon, another still lower to the governante, and withdrew, very well fatisfied, after having whispered to me that we should see one another often, and that I had nothing to do but to stay where I was .--- When he was gone, the licentiate afked my name, and reasons for leaving my native country; and by these questions engaged me, in presence of Dame Jacinta, to recount my story. They were both very much diverted, especially with the account of my last adventure, Camilla and Don Raphael tickling them so much, that it was like to have cost the old canon his life; for while he laughed with all his force, he was feized with fuch a violent fit of coughing, that I imagined it would have been his last. As he had not yet made his will, you may eafily guess how his housekeeper was alarmed: trembling and aftonished she ran to the assistance of the good man, rubb'd his forehead, and clapp'd him on the back, as is practifed with children when they have the chin-cough. However, this was but a false alarm: the old man ceased to cough, and his governante to torment him; and I would have finished my story, had not Dame Jacinta, who dreaded another sit, opposed it, and carried me out of the canon's chamber into a wardrobe, where, among several suits of cloaths, was that of my predecessor. This she made me put on, and leave my own in its room, which I was not forry to preserve, in hopes that it would still be of use to me. After which we went to prepare dinner.

I was not a novice in the art of dreffing victuals, having ferved a happy apprenticeship under Dame Leonarda, who might have pass'd for a good cook: she was not, however, comparable to Dame Jacinta, who, for aught I know, would have gained the palm from the cook of the archbishop of Toledo. She excelled in every thing :---her foups were exquifite, on account of her art in chufing and mixing the different kinds of gravy, of which they were composed; and her hashes were feasoned in such a manner, as rendered them extremely agreeable to the palate.—When dinner was ready, we returned into the canon's chamber, where, while I laid the cloth on a table set just by his elbow-chair, the housekeeper tucked a napkin under the old man's chin, and tied it over his shoulders. In a moment after I brought in a mels of porridge, that en nis to n; ot p-n's ie-e-ve ry of re

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that might have been presented to the most celebrated director of Madrid; and two courfes, which would have stimulated the sensuality of a viceroy, had not Dame Jacinta been sparing of her spices, for fear of inflaming the gout of the licentiate. - At fight of these delicate dishes, my old master, whom I believed impotent in all his members, shewed me, that he had not as yet lost intirely the use of his arms: he help'd to disencumber himself of his pillows, and chearfully prepared himself for eating. - Tho' his hand shook, it did not refuse its service, but went and came with great expedition; in fuch a manner, however, that it spilt upon the tablecloth and napkin one half of what was intended for his mouth. — I took away the foup when he had done with it, and brought in a roafted partridge, flank'd with two quails, which Dame Jacinta carved for him.—She took care also to make him drink frequently large draughts of wine, a little diluted in a large and deep filver cup, which she held to his mouth, as if he had been a child of fifteen months. He fell tooth and nail upon his course, and did no less honour to the birds than he had done to the porridge; and when he had stuffed himself to the tongue, the devotee untied his napkin, replaced his pillows, and left him in quiet to take his afternoon's nap in his chair; while we, having uncovered the table, went to dinner in our turn.

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In this manner did our canon dine every day, who, for aught I know, was the greatest glutton of the whole chapter :- Tho' his fupper was commonly more flight, confifting, for the most part of a pullet and some conferves. I fed well in this house, and lived a very peaceable life, having only one grievance, which was no other than being obliged to watch my mafter, and pass the whole night like a nurse. - Besides a retention of urine, that obliged him to ask for his chamber-pot ten times in an hour, he was subject to profuse sweats; and when these happened, it was my business to shift him. "Gil Blas, (said " he, the fecond night) thon hast activity and " address; and I foresee that I shall be very well pleased with thy service. - I recom-" mend to thee above all things to behave " thyself respectfully towards Dame Jacinta, " fhe is a wench who has ferved me these fif-" teen years with a fingular zeal, and takes " fuch care of my person, that I can never " enough shew my gratitude: wherefore I " own she is more dear to me than all my re-" lations. For the love of her I have turned " out of doors my nephew, my own fifter's " fon, who paid no respect to the poor girl; " and, far from doing justice to the fincere " attachment she has for me, the insolent boy " treated her as an hypocrite; for in this age " all virtue appears hypocrify to young peo-" ple. - Thank heaven! I have got rid of " the scoundrel: I prefer the love that is ma-" nifeste d rery

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" nifested for me to all the ties of blood, and " am fway'd only by the benefits I receive." -" You are in the right, fir, (faid I to the " licentiate:) gratitude ought to have more " weight with us than the laws of nature." " Doubtless (he replied;) and people will see " by my last will, that I have no regard for " my relations. My housekeeper will have " a good share, and thou shalt not be forgot, " provided that thou goest on to serve me, " as thou hast begun. The footman whom " I turned away yesterday, has lost a good " legacy by his own folly; if that paultry " fellow had not, by his misbehaviour, oblig-" ed me to difmis him, I would have made " his fortune; but he was a proud coxcomb, " who was deficient in his respect for Dame " Jacinta; and an idle rascal, who dreaded " the smallest trouble. - He, forsooth, did " not love to watch over me; and look'd up-" on it as a great fatigue to spend the night " in contributing to my ease." "Ah, the " wretch! (cried I, as if the genius of my " friend had inspired me) he was not worthy " of living with fuch an honourable mafter! " A lad who has the happiness of appertain-" ing unto you, ought to be indefatigable in " his zeal: he ought to make a pleasure of " his duty, and not to think himself fatigued, " even when he fweats blood and water for " your fervice."

I perceived that these words were very agreeable to the licentiate, who was no less satisfied with with the affurance I gave him of being always perfectly refigned to the will of Dame Jacinta. Willing therefore to pass for a valet whom fatigue could not dispirit, I did my duty with the best grace I could assume, and never complained of being up all night; a circumstance which, however, I found very difagreeable; and had it not been for the legacy with which I fed my hopes, I should have been very foon difgusted with my condition. - Indeed I slept fome hours in the day-time; and the governante to do her justice, had a good deal of regard for me. - This must be ascribed to the care I took in gaining her good graces, by the most complaisant and respectful behaviour: when I was at table with her and her niece. whose name was Inefilla, I shifted their plates, filled wine, and ferved them with a most particular attention; by which means I infinuated myself into their friendship. One day, while Dame Jacinta was gone out to market, feeing myself alone with Inesilla, I began to converse with her, and asked if her father and mother were still alive. "O! not at all, (an-" fwered she) they are dead long-long ago: " -my good aunt told me fo. - As for my own part, I never faw them." I fincerely believed the little girl, tho' her answer was not categorical; and put her into fuch a humour of talking, that she told me more of the matter than I wanted to know. - She informed me, or rather I gathered from her artless chat, that her good aunt had a very good friend.

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friend, who lived likewise with an old canon, whose temporalities he managed; and that these happy domesticks expected to join the pillage of their masters by a marriage, the iweets of which they tafted beforehand. I have already observed that Dame Jacinta, though fomewhat fuperannuated, had still a freshness of complexion. True, indeed, the spared nothing to preserve it; for, besides a glyfter which the took every morning, the swallowed during the day, and when she went to bed, some excellent jellies of her own composing, and slept soundly all night, while I watched my master: but that which, perhaps, contributed more than any thing to preferve. her colour from fading, was an iffue, which Inefilla told me she had in each leg.

CHAP. II.

In what manner the canon was treated when he fell fick: — the consequence of it; and the legacy which he left to Gil Blas.

I Served the licentiate Sedillo three months without complaining of the bad nights he made me pass; at the end of which time he fell sick of a fever, and felt his gout increased by the pain which it occasioned; so that, for the first time in his life, which had been long, he had recourse to physicians, and sent for doctor Sangrado, whom all Valladolid looked upon as another Hippocrates. Dame Jacinta would have been better pleased, if the canon Voe. I.

had begun by making his will, and even dropt fome hints on the subject; but, besides that he did not believe himself near his end, in some certain things he was extremely obstinate: I therefore went in search of Dr. Sangrado, and brought him to the house. He was a tall, meagre, pale man, who had kept the shears of Clotho employed during forty years at least. — This learned physician had a very solemn appearance, weighed his discourse, and gave an emphasis to his expressions: his reasoning was geometrical, and his opinions extremely singular.

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After having examined the fymptoms of my master's disease, he said to him with a very physical air, " The business here is to " fupply the defect of perspiration, which is " obstructed: others, in my place, would " doubtless prescribe saline draughts, diure-"tics, diaphoretics, and fuch medicines as " abound with mercury and fulphur; but ca-" thartics and fudorifics are pernicious drugs, " and all the preparations of chymistry are " only calculated to do mischief: for my own " part, I practice a method more fimple, and " more fure. - Pray, what is your ordinary "diet?" "My usual food (replied the ca-" non) is broth and juicy meat," - " Broth " and juicy meat! (cried the doctor, fur-" prized) truly, I do not wonder to find you "fick: fuch delicious victuals are poisoned " pleafures, and fnares that luxury fpreads " for mankind, in order to ruin them the " more

" more effectually. You must renounce all " palatable food: the most salutary is that "which is most insipid; for as the blood is "infipid, it requires fuch victuals as partake "the most of its own nature. — And do you "drink wine? (added he.") "Yes, (said "the licentiate) wine diluted." - "O! di-"luted as much as you please, replied the " physician:) what an irregularity is here? "what a frightful regimen! you ought to " have been dead long ago. How old are "you, pray?" "I am going in my fixty-" ninth year, (replied the canon.")-" Right, " (faid the physician,) an early old age is al-"ways the fruit of intemperance. If you " had drank nothing else than pure water all " your life, and had been fatisfied with simple " nourishment, such as boil'd apples for ex-"ample, you would not now be tormented "with the gout, and all your limbs would e perform their functions with ease. I do " not despair, however, of setting you to "rights again, provided you be wholly re-" figned to my directions."

The licentiate having promised to obey him in all things, Sangrado sent me for a surgeon whom he named, and ordered him to take from my master six good porringers of blood, as the first effort, in order to supply the want of perspiration. Then he said to the surgeon, "Master Martin Onnez, return in three hours, and take as much more; and repeat the fame evacuation to-morrow. It is a gross

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error to think that blood is necessary for "the preservation of life: a patient cannot " be blooded too much; for as he is obliged 44 to perform no confiderable motion or ex-" ercife, but just only to breath, he has no " more occasion for blood than a man who is " afleep; life, in both, confifting in the pulse " and respiration only." The doctor having ordered frequent and copious evacuations of this kind, he told us, that we must make the canon drink warm water inceffantly; affuring us that water, drank in abundance, was the true specific in all distempers whatever. And when he went away, he told Dame Jacinta and me, with an air of confidence, that he would answer for his patient's life, provided we would treat him in the manner he had prescribed. The governante, who possibly thought otherwise of this method, protested that it should be followed with the utmost exactness. Accordingly we fet about warming water with all dispatch; and as the physician had recommended to us, above all things, not to be too sparing of it, we made my master drink for the first dose two or three pints, at as many draughts. An hour after we repeated it, and returning to the charge, from time to time, overwhelmed his ftomach with a deluge of water: the furgeon seconding us, on the other hand, by the quantity of blood which he drew from him, in less than two days the old canon was reduced to extremity. This

This good priest being quite spent, said to me with a feeble voice, as I presented him with a large glass of the specific, "Hold, Gil Blas, give me no more of it, my friend: " I fee plainly that I must die, in spite of the "virtues of water; and tho' there is scarce a drop of blood left in my body, I don't " find myfelf a whit the better; which is a " plain proof, that the most expert physician " in the world cannot prolong our days, when " their fatal period is arrived: go therefore " and fetch a notary, for I want to make my " will." At these last words, which I was not forry to hear, I affected to feem melancholy, and concealing the defire I had to execute his commission, "Well, but, sir, (said "I) you are not yet so low, thank God, but that you may recover." "No, no, child, " (replied he) it is all over with me. I feel " the gout mounting upwards, and death ap-" proaching. Make hafte, therefore, and do " as I bid thee." I perceived, fure enough, that he changed visibly, and the affair appeared fo urgent, that I went out as fast as possible to fulfil his orders; leaving with him Dame facinta, who was more afraid than I that he would die intestate. I went into the house of the first notary I was directed to, and finding him at home, "Sir, (faid I) the licentiate "Sedillo, my mafter, draws towards his end, ed and wants to have his last will made; fo " that there is not a moment to lofe." The notary, who was a brifk old man, and took G 3 delighr delight in rallying, asked what physician attended the canon; I answer'd, doctor Sangrado. — At that name, seizing his hat and cloak in a hurry, "Zooks! (cried he) let us "make haste; for the doctor is so expediti"ous that he seldom gives his patients time to send for notaries; that man has choused

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" me out of a great many jobs."

So faying, he followed me with great eagerness, and while we walked together at a good pace, that we might arrive before he should be at the last gasp, "Sir, (said I to him) you "know that a testator at the point of death, " is apt to forget things: now, if my mafter " should not remember me, I beg you will " remind him of my zeal and attachment." "That I will, my child: (replied the little " notary,) thou mayst depend upon me for "that. I will even advise him to give thee " fomething confiderable; let him be never " fo little disposed to reward thy service." The licentiate, when we came into his chamber, had still the use of his senses, and Dame Jacinta, who was with him, her vifage bathed in tears, which she had at command, had played her part, and bespoke the good man's be-nevolence. So that she and I left the notary alone with him, and went into the antichamber, where meeting the furgeon whom the doctor had fent to make one evacuation more, we ftopt him. " Hold, Mr. Martin, (faid " the governante) you cannot go into Signior "Sedillo's chamber at present; he is dictat-

ging his last will to a notary who is with " him; when that is done, you shall have leave

" to do your office."

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This pious gentlewoman and I were much afraid, that the licentiate would die before his will could be finished: but happily for us, the deed that occasioned our disquiet, was execued: and the notary finding me in his way, as he came out, clapped me on the shoulder, faying with a smile, "Gill Blas is not forgotten." These words inspired me with excessive joy; and I thought myfelf fo much obliged to my master for having remembred me, that I promiled to pray with all my heart for his foul, lafter his death, which foon happened; for the furgeon having blooded him again, the poor old man, who was but too much exhausted before, expired almost during the operation. As he breathed his last fighs, the physician came in, and looked very foolish, notwithstanding his long practice of dispatching patients. Nevertheless, far from imputing the canon's death to his watry draughts and evacuations; he obferved as he went out, with an air of indifference, that the patient had not lost blood enough, nor drank a fufficient quantity of warm water. While the executioner of this fublime art, I mean the furgeon, feeing alfo, that there was no more occasion for his office, followed doctor Sangrado.

As foon as the breath went out of our patron's body, Dame Jacinta, Inefilla, and I, railed a concert of mournful cries which were -heard. papers,

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heard all over the neighbourhood: the governante especially, who had the greatest cause to rejoice, uttered fuch doleful accents, that one would have thought the was the most afflicted person upon earth; and the chamber was instantly filled with people drawn thither, more by curiofity than compassion. The relations of the deceased, no sooner learned the news of his death, than they poured into the house, to feal up every thing, and found the house-keeper in fuch affliction, that they imagined at first, the canon had not made his will: but they foon understood that there was one fanctioned by all the usual formalities; which when they came to open, and faw that the testator had disposed of his best effects in favour of Dame Jacinta and the little girl, they made his funeral speech in terms not much to the honour of his memory: they pronounced an elogium on the devotee, at the fame time, and even bestowed fome praises on me, who, I must own, deferved some at their hands: for the licentiate (reft his foul!) in order to make me remember him as long as I should live, explained himfelf in an article of his will, with regard to me, in this manner .- " Item, as Gil Blas is a " young man of fome understanding already,

"in order to compleat his learning, I leave to him my library, all my books and manu-

" fcripts without exception."

I could not conceive where this pretended library could be, having never perceived any fuch thing in the house. I knew only of a few papers,

papers, with five or fix volumes that flood upon a shelf in my master's closet, and these were my legacy. Tho' the books could not be of any great fervice to me, one being intitled, the compleat Housewife: another treated of, Indigettion and the Method of Cure; the rest were, The four Parts of the Breviary, which the moths had almost consumed. With regard to the Manuscripts, the most curious contained all the proceedings of a law-fuit in which he was once engaged, for his prebend. After having examined the legacy with more attention than it deserved, I left it to the relations who envied me fo much. I gave them back the very cloaths I wore, and refumed my own; claiming my wages only, as the fruit of my fervice; and refolving to feek a place elfewhere. As for Dame Jacinta, besides the money which was left to her, the was in poffession. of some valuable effects, which, by the affiftance of her good friend, the had found means to secrete, during the licentiate's last illness.

CHAP. III.

Gil Blas engages bimself in the service of Doctor Sangrado, and becomes a celebrated physician.

Resolved to visit Signior Arias de Londonna and consult his register for a new place; but as I was just going into the blind alley where he lived, I met doctor Sangrado, whom I had not seen since the death of my master, and took the freedom to salute him. He recollect-

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ed me immediately, although I had changed my drefs, and expressing some joy at seeing me, "Art thou there, my child? (faid he) I was just thinking of thee; having occasion for a good lad to ferve me, I imagined that thou wouldst answer my purpose very well; if thou canft read and write." "Sir, (answered I) in that particular, I can do your business." "Say'st thou so? (said he) then thou art the man I want: come to my house, where thou shalt find every thing agreeable: I will treat thee with distinction; and though I give no wages, thou shalt want for nothing: I will take care to maintain thee handsomely; and will even discover to thee, the great mystery of curing all diseases; in a word, thou shalt -rather be my pupil than my fervant."

- I accepted the doctor's proposal, in hopes of making myself illustrious in physick, under the auspices of fuch a learned master? and he carried me home with him on the instant, in order to initiate me in the employment for which I was defigned. This employment confifted in writing the names and places of abode of the patients who fent for him while he was abroad: for this purpose, there was in the house, a regifter in which an old woman who was his fole domestic, set down their several directions: but besides that she was utterly ignorant of spelling, she wrote so ill, that for the most part, it was impossible to decypher her scrawl. I was invested with the charge of this book, which might have been with great justice, stiled ple

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a register of the dead; for almost all the people whose names it contained, gave up the ghost. I inserted in it (to use the expression) the names of those people who were to set out for the other world, as the clerk of a stage-coach-office registers those who take places. The pen was seldom out of my hand, because there was not at that time, a physician in Valladolid, of more credit than doctor Sangrado, who had acquired great reputation with the public, by a pomp of words, a solemn air, and some lucky cures which had done him

more honour than he deserved.

He did not want practice, nor of consequence, money, which however, did not make us fare the better, his housekeeping being extremely parfimonious; our ordinary food confifting of peafe, beans, boiled codlins, or cheefe; which aliments (he faid) were agreeable to the stomach, as being most proper for trituration, in other words, eafily brayed. Notwithstanding this his opinion, however, he did not approve of our eating a belly-full even of them: in which, to be fure, he was much in the right: but if he forbid his maid and me to eat a grert deal, he allowed us by way of recompence, to drink as much water as we could swallow: far from restricting us in this particular, he would sometimes say, "Drink, my children, health confifts in the suppleness and humectation of the parts: drink water in great abundance: it is an univerfal menstruum that diffolves all kinds of falt. When the course

of the blood is too languid, this accelerates its motion; and when too rapid, checks its impetuofity." The honest doctor was so well convinced of the truth of this doctrine, that he himself drank nothing but water, though he was well stricken in years. He defined old age, a natural decay that withers and consumes us: and in consequence of this definition, deplored the ignorance of those who call wine "the milk of old men:" for he maintained that the juice of the grape, wastes and destroys them; and with great eloquence observed that this fatal liquor is to them, as to all the world, a treacherous friend and deceitful pleasure.

In spite of all this fine reasoning, I had not been eight days in the house, when I was seized with a loofeness, and began to feel great disorder in my Bowels, which I was rash enough to ascribe to the universal dissolvent and meagre subsistence on which I lived. I complained of it to my mafter, in hopes that he would relent and allow me a little wine at meals: but he was too much an enemy to that liquor to gratify my expectation. " If thou feelest in thyself (faid he to me) any reluctance to fimple element, there are innocent aids in plenty, that will support thy stomach against the infipid tafte of water; fage (for example) and baum will give it an admirable flavour; and an infusion of corn-poppy, gillyslower, and rofemary, will render it still more delicious.

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Notwithstanding all he could fay in praise of water and the excellent beveridges he taught me to compose, I drank of it with fuch moderation, that perceiving my temperance, he faid, "Why, truly, Gil Blas, I am not at all furprised, that thou dost not enjoy good health. Thou doft not drink enough, my friend. Water taken in small quantities, serves only to disentangle the particles of the bile, and give them more activity; whereas they should be drowned in a copious dilution: don't be afraid. my child, that abundance of water will weaken and relax thy ftomach: lay afide that pannic fear which perhaps thou entertainest of plentiful drinking. I will warrant the confequence, and if thou dost not look upon me as a fufficient bondsman, Celsus himself shall be thy fecurity. That Roman oracle bestows an admirable elogium on water, and afterwards fays in express terms, that those who excuse their drinking of wine, on account of a weak ftomach, do a manifest injury to that organ, by using such a cloak for their own fenfuality."

As it would not have looked well for me to shew myself intractable in the very beginning of my career in physic; I seemed persuaded of his being in the right, and will even own I was effectually convinced; so that I continued to drink water on the guaranty of Celsus, or rather to drown my bile in copious draughts of that liquor; and although I felt myself every day more and more incommoded by it, prejudice got the better of experience; so happily

was I disposed by nature, for becoming a phyfician. I could not always, however, relift the violence of my disorder, which increased to fuch a degree, that I resolved at length, to leave doctor Sangrado, but he invested me with a new employment which made me change that resolution. " Hark'ee, my child, (faid he one day) I am not one of those harsh and ungrateful masters who let their domestics grow grey in their fervice, before they recompence them. I am well pleased with thy behaviour, I have a regard for thee, and without further delay will make thy fortune. I will immediately disclose to thee the whole extent of that falutary art which I have professed so many years. Other physicians make this confift in the knowledge of a thousand difficult sciences; but I intend to go a shorter way to work, and spare thee the trouble of studying pharmacy, anatomy, botany, and physic: know, my friend, all that is required, is to bleed thy patients and make them drink warm water. This is the secret of curing all the di-stempers incident to man. Yes! that wonderful fecret which I reveal to thee, and which nature, impenetrable to my brethren, hath not been able to hide from my refearches, is contained in these two points, of plentiful bleeding and frequent draughts of water. I have nothing more to impart; thou knowest physic to the very bottom, and reaping the fruit of my long experience, art become in a twinkling as skilful as I am. Thou may'st (continued he) eafe

ease me not a little, at present: in the morning, thou shalt keep our register, and in the afternoon, go and visit a part of my patients: while I take care of the nobility and clergy, thou shalt go in my room, to the houses of tradesmen, where I am called; and when thou shalt have practised some time, I will procure thy admission into the faculty. Thou art learned, Gil Blas, before thou turnest physician, whereas others prescribe a long time, generally all their lives, without ever becoming learned."

I thanked the doctor for having enabled me with fuch dispatch, to serve as his deputy; and as an acknowledgment of his favours, affured him, that I would follow his maxims as long as I lived, even if they should be contrary to those of Hippocrates. But this affurance was not altogether fincere; for I disapproved of his opinion with regard to water, and refolved to drink wine every day, when I went out to vifit my patients. I committed my own cloaths to a peg for the second time, and put on a suit of my masters, that I might appear in all refpects, like a physician: after which, I prepared myself for exercising medicine at the expence of whom it should concern. My coup d'effai being upon an Alguazil who was ill of a pleurify, I ordered him to be blooded without mercy, and filled to the tongue with water: I went afterwards into the house of a pastrycook who lay roaring with the gout, and whose blood I was no more sparing of than the Alguazil's;

Alguazil's; taking care also not to restrict him in the article of water. For these prescriptions, I received twelve rials, which made me fo enamoured of the profession, that I thought " the more mischief the better sport." Coming out of the pastry-cook's house, I met Fabricius, whom I had not feen fince the death of the licentiate Sedillo; and who having looked at me fome minutes with surprise, set his hands in his fides, and burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. It was not without reason; for having a cloak that trailed on the ground, with a doublet and breeches that would have ferved a man four times as big as me; my figure was truly original. I let him laugh till he was tired, not without being tempted to follow his example; but I constrained myself in order to preferve decorum, and the better ape the phyfician who is no rifible animal. If my ludicrous appearance had excited the mirth of Fabricius, my gravity increased it; and when he had indulged it sufficiently, "Upon my confcience, Gil Blas, (faid he) thou art pleasantly equipt. Who the devil has disguised thee in this manner?" "Softly, friend, (replied I) foftly. - Learn to shew more respect for another Hippocrates; and know, that I am the deputy of doctor Sangrado, the most celebrated physician of Valladolid, with whom I have lived these three weeks. He has taught me physic to the very bottom, and as he cannot, in person, attend all the sick who send for him. I affift him in his visitation: he takes care of

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the great, and I of the plebeians." "Very well, (replied Fabricius) he leaves the blood of the commonality to thee, while he reserves that of the gentry to himself: I congratulate thee upon thy share; for it is better to have to do with the populace, than with persons of fashion: happy is a suburb physician! his faults are less observed, and his assassinations less known. Yes, my child, (added he) thy situation is to be envied, and to speak in the words of Alexander, if I was not Fabricius. I could wish to be Gil Blas."

To shew the Son of Barber Nunnez, that he had reason to praise the happiness of my prefent condition, I produced the rials which I had received from the Alguazil, and pastrycook; upon which, we went into a publick house in order to spend some of them: here we were ferved with pretty good wine, which the longing defire I had of tafting that liquor, making me think still better than it was, I drank huge draughts of it, and (no disparagement to the Roman Oracle) the more I filled my stomach, the less did that organ complain of the injury it received. Fabricius and I having staid together a long time, in the public-house, and laughed heartily at the expence of our masters, as the custom is among servants; we parted in the twilight, after having made a mutual promise of meeting again in the same place, next day in the afternoon.

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Gil Blas continues to act the physician with equal capacity and success. — The adventure of the ring retrieved.

perform or the THAD just got home, when doctor Sangrado came in, to whom I gave an account of the patients I had visited, and put into his hand eight reals which remained of the twelve I had received for my prescriptions. "Eight " reals! (faid he, after having counted them,) "this is a small matter for two visits; but we " must refuse nothing." So it appeared: for he kept fix, and giving me two, "Hold, Gil "Blas, (added he) there is something for thee "to begin stock: I allow thee a fourth part " of what thou shalt get, and thou wilt be " rich in a very short time, (my friend) for, " please God, there will be plenty of diseases " this feafon."

I had reason to be contented with my share; because, resolving to detain always, a third part of what I should receive from the patients, and afterwards, touching a fourth of what should remain, it would on the whole (if there be any truth in arithmetic) amount to one half of what I should earn. This consideration inspiring me with new ardour for my profession, next day when I had dined, I resumed my physical dress, and going out, visited several patients whom I had registred, and whom I treated after the same manner, tho' their distempers

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were quite different. Hitherto, things had gone fmoothly on, and no body (thank heaven) found fault with my prescriptions; but however excellent the practice of physic may be, it cannot 'scape censure: going into the house of a grocer whose son was dropsical, I there met with a little fwarthy physician called doctor Cuchillo, whom a relation of the grocer's had brought along with him: I made profound bows to every body present, and in particular, to the person who (I concluded) was called to confult with me about the distemper of the patient; he saluted me with great gravity, then eying me attentively for fome minutes, "Signior doctor, (faid he) pray excuse my curiosity; I thought I had been acquainted with all my brethren the physicians of Valladolid: but I confess, your features are utterly unknown to me: fure you must not have been long fettled in this city." I answered that I was a young practitioner, who as yet only prescribed under the auspices of doctor Sangrado. "I congratulate you (faid he, bowing) on your having embraced the method of fuch a great man; and I do not doubt that you are already master of your business, notwithstanding your youthful appearance." He spoke this so naturally, that I did not know whether he was in jest or earnest, and I was thinking upon some answer, when the grocer interposing, said, "Gentlemen, I am perfuaded that you are both perfectly well acquainted with the art of physic, therefore, pray ,

pray examine the fituation of my fon, and prescribe what you shall judge proper for his cure."

Accordingly, the little doctor enquired into the state of our patient, and after having made me observe all the symptoms of the disease, asked in what manner I proposed to treat him. " I am of opinion, (said I) that he should be blooded every day, and drink hot water in abundance." At these words, the little phyfician faid with a fatirical grin, " And do you think these remedies will save his life?" Never doubt that (cried I, in a resolute tone) they must certainly produce that effect, being (as doctor Sangrado observes) specifics against all kinds of diftempers. "At that rate, (replied he) Celfus is very much to blame, in affuring us, that for the more easy cure of a dropsy, it is requifite to make the patient fuffer both hunger and thirst." Oh! Celfus (I refumed) is not my oracle: he was as liable to miftakes as any other; and I have sometimes found my account in acting quite contrary to his opinion. perceive by your discourse, (said Cuchillo) the fure and latisfactory method, that doctor Sangrado would infinuate into young practitioners: the whole of his practice confifts in bleeding and aqueous draughts; therefore, I am not at all furprifed to fee so many honest people die under his hands." None of your invectives, (faid I, interrupting him with some heat) it does not look well to hear a man of your profession cast such reflections. Come, come, Mr. doctor,





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doctor, abundance of fick people are fent to the other world, without being blooded, or drinking hot water; and I don't doubt that you have dismissed your share of them: if you have any thing to fay against doctor Sangrado, commit it to paper; he will answer it, and we shall soon see on which side the laughers are. " By St. Jago and St. Dennis! (cried he, in a rage) you are little acquainted with doctor Cuchille! Know, friend, that I have both teeth and nails, and am not at all afraid of Sangrado, who in spite of his vanity and prefumption, is a downright ninny." The appearance of the little doctor making me despise his wrath, I replied with great bitterness; he answered in the same manner. and we came to fifty cuffs in a very fhort time: fome blows paffed, and each of us loft an handful of hair, before the grocer and his kinfman could part us; which when they had accomplished, I was paid for my vifit and difmiffed, while they retained my antagonist, who feemed to them the more skilful of the two.

After this adventure, I had like to have met with another as bad: for going to visit a fat chanter who was ill of a fever, I no sooner mentioned hot water, than he fell into a rage against the specific, cursed and swore, called me a thousand names, and even threatened to throw me out of the window. I moved off faster than I came in, and not chusing to see any more patients that day, betook myself to

the house appointed for the rendezvous between me and Fabricius, who was already there: and as we found ourselves in a frolickfome humour, we drank hard, and went home in a state of elevation—that is, half seas over.

Signior Sangrado did not observe that I was drunk, because he mistook my extravagant gestures in recounting the quarrel I had with the little doctor, for an effect of the emotion occasioned by the battle: besides. having been principally concerned in our difpute, he became a party, and piqued at Cuchillo, faid, "Thou haft done well, Gil Blas, in defending the honour of our remedies against that little abortion of the faculty. He affirms then, that aqueous draughts are improper for the dropfy! Ignorant wretch! I maintain—I do—that a dropfical patient cannot drink too much. Yes, water (added he) can cure all kinds of dropsies, as well as rheumatisms, and the green-sickness; it is moreover excellent in fevers where the patient burns and shivers at the same time: and of incredible effect even in those distempers that are imputed to cold, ferous and phlegmatic humours: this opinion may appear strange to fuch raw physicians as Cuchillo; but it is eafily supported by theory and practice; and if fuch as he were capable of reasoning philofophically, instead of decrying my method, they would become my most zealous partizans."

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He did not therefore suspect my being fuddled, so much was he enraged; for, in order to inflame him the more against the little doctor, I had thrown into my story, some circumstances of my own invention. Nevertheless, fired as he was with what I had told him, he perceived that I drank more water that evening than usual, the wine having made me very thirsty. Any other than Sangrado would have suspected my extraordinary drought, and the great draughts I swallowed; but he firmly believed that I began to relish watry potions; and faid, with a smile, " I see, Gil "Blas, thou hast no longer an aversion to "water. Heaven be praised, thou drinkest "it now like Nectar. A change that does "not surprise me at all, my friend; for I' "knew that it would foon grow familiar to "thy taste." "Sir, (I replied) there's a "time for all things: I would not at present, " give a pint of water for an hogshead of "wine." The doctor, charmed with this answer, did not neglect such a fair opportunity of extolling the excellence of water: but uttered a new elogium on it, not like a cold advocate: but with all the fervour of an enthusiast. " A thousand times (cried he) a "thousand and ten thousand times more va-" luable and innocent than the taverns of our "days, were those baths of ages past, into " which people did no go to proftitute in a " shameful manner, their lives and fortunes "by glutting themselves with wine: but " where

" where people met for amusement, and drank " hot water with honour and fecurity! One " cannot enough admire the wife provision of " those masters of civil life, who established " public places where water was freely given " to all comers, and who secured the wine in " the shops of apothecaries, permitting it to " be used by the prescriptions of physicians "only. What furprifing fagacity! It is, " doubtless (added be) owing to some lucky " remains of that antient frugality, worthy " of the golden age, that there are still a few " who, like thou and I, drink nothing but "water; and who, as a prefervative from, " or cure of all diftempers, truft to hot wa-" ter unboiled: for I have observed that boil-" ed water is more heavy, and less agreeable es to the flomach."

While he uttered this eloquent harangue, I had like to have laughed in his face more than once: I kept my gravity however,-I did more. I entered into the doctor's fentiments, inveighed against the use of wine, and lamented that mankind had contracted a tafte for fuch a pernicious liquor. Then, (as my thirst was not fufficiently quenched) I filled a large goblet wish water, and having swallowed long draughts of it, "Come, Sir, (faid I to my " mafter) let us regale ourselves with this " benevolent liquor, and revive in your house " those antient baths which you regret so " much." He applauded my zeal, and during a whole quarter of an hour, exhorted me to drink drin liari to i and pro ing

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drink nothing but water. In order to familiarize myself to this prescription, I promised to swallow a great quantity every evening; and that I might the more easily perform my promise, went to bed with a resolution of go-

ing to the tavern every day.

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The opposition I met with at the grocer's house, did not deter me from prescribing warm water and bleeding, next day. As I came out of a house where I had been to visit a frantic poet, I met an old woman in the street, who accosting me, asked if I was a physician; when I answered in the affirmative, then (faid she) I most humbly beg you will come along with me; my neice was yesterday taken ill, and I don't know what is the matter with her." I followed the old gentlewoman, who conducted me to a house, and introduced me to a pretty neat chamber, where I found a person in bed, and going towards her, in order to enquire into the fymptoms of her disease, was immediately struck with her features, which when I had observed some minutes, I recollected her to be no other than the female adventurer who had so dextrously acted the part of Camilla. As for her part, the did not feem to remember me; whether the oppression of her own distemper, or my physical garb, secured me from her recollection-Laying hold of her arm, in order to feel the pulse, I perceived my ring upon her finger; at fight of which, I felt a terrible emotion, and a violent defire of attempting VOL. I. H

to retrieve it: but confidering that the women might fall a crying, and Don Raphael, or fome other champion of the fair fex, come to their affiftance, I was at pains to refift the temptation, and imagining it would be better to diffemble, and to take the advice of Fabricius, fluck to this last resolution. mean time, the old woman preffing me to let her know the nature of her neice's diftemper, I was not fool enough to own myfelf ignorant of the matter; but, on the contrary, affecting the man of skill, and copying my master's deportment, I told her with great gravity, that the distemper proceeded from the patient's want of perspiration, and that, of consequence, the must be speedily blooded, that evacuation being the only substitute of perspiration: I likewife prescribed warm water, that the rules of our practice might be exactly observed.

Having made my vifit as fhort as possible, I ran to find the fon of Nunnez, whom I met at the door, going out to execute a commiffion for his mafter: I told him my new adventure, asking if he thought, I should cause Camilla to be arrested in course of law; he answered, " Not at all. That is not the way to fee thy ring again; for the officers of justice hate to make restitution. Remember the jail of Astorga, where thy horse, money, and even thy cloaths were detained by these harpies. We must rather make use of our own industry, in recovering thy jewel; I'll undertake to find out some stratagem for that pur-

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ec to pose; and will think of it, in my way to the hospital, where I carry a short message to the steward, from my master: go and wait for me at our tavern, and be not impatient, for I will be with thee in a very little time."

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He did not, however, arrive at the rendezyous, tillafter I had been there three hours; and then so disguised, that at first I did not know him: for he changed his dress, twisted his frair into a queue, covered one half of his face with a pair of artificial whifkers, provided himself with a huge fword, the hilt of which. was at least three feet in circumference; and marched at the head of five men who looked as herce as himself, and wore also long rapiers and thick mustachios. "Your Servant Signior Gil Blas, (faid he, accosting me) you see in me an alguazil of a new stamp, and in these brave fellows who accompany me, foldiers of the same model. Shew us only the house of the woman who stole your diamond, and be affured that we will make her restore it in a twinkling." I embraced Fabricius at this discourse, which explained the stratagem he intended to put in practice in my behalf; and affured him, that I very much approved of his expedient. I faluted also the false soldiers, who were three valets, and two journeymen barbers of his acquaintance, whom he had engaged to act this part. Having treated the whole brigade with wine, we went all together, in the twilight, to Camilla's lodgings, and knocked at the door, which the old H 2 woman

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woman opening, and taking my attendants for the terriers of justice, who never entered that house without cause, was seized with confternation. "Courage, good mother, (faid Fabricius to her) we are come hither only on account of a small affair that will soon be determined." So faying, we advanced to the chamber of the fick person, conducted by the old woman, who walked before, lighting us with a wax taper in a filver candlestick. Taking the candle in my hand, I went towards the bed, and discovering my face to Camilla, " Perfidious woman! (faid I) behold the too credulous Gil Blas, whom you have tricked. Ah wretch! I have found you at last, and the corregidor, in consequence of my information, has ordered this alguazil to apprehend you. Come, Mr. Tipstaff, (said I to Fabricius) do your office." There is no occafion (answered he, raising his voice) for exhorting me to do my duty. I remember that there creature, who has been a long time marked in my memorandum-book, with red letters. Rise, my princess, (added he) dress yourself with all dispatch. I intend to be your usher, and conduct you to the city-jail, if you think well of it.

At these words, Camilla, sick as she was, perceiving that two of his followers with the great whifkers, were about to drag her out by force, fat up in her bed, clasped her hands in a suppliant posture, and looking at me with terror in her eyes, "Signior Gil Blas, (faid

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she) I conjure you by the chaste mother who bore you, to have pity upon me! though I am very guilty, I am still more unfortunate! don't ruin me; I will restore your ring." So faying, she took it off from her finger, and put it into my hand. But I told her, my diamond alone would not fuffice, and that she must besides, make restitution of the thoufand ducats which had been stole from me in the furnished lodgings. "Oh Signior! (she replied) do not ask your ducats of me; the traitor, Don Raphael, whom I have not feen fince that time, carried them off the fame night." "Oho, my little darling, (faid Fabricius to her) you think to get out of the scrape, by denying you had any share of the booty; but you shan't be so easily quit, I affure you: your being an accomplice of Don Raphael is a fufficient reason for obliging you to give an account of your past life. You have, doubtless, a great many things on your conscience, and therefore you shall go to prifon, (if you please) and make a general confession. I will carry this old gentlewoman thither also; (added he) for I imagine she knows a great many curious stories which the corregidor will not be forry to hear."

At these words the two women put every thing in practice to melt us; filling the chamber with cries, groans, and lamentations: while the old woman on her knees, sometimes before the alguazil, and sometimes before his attendants, endeayoured to move their compassion;

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Camilla implored me in the most affecting manner, to fave her from the hands of justice. Upon which, I pretended to relent, faying to the fon of Nunnez, Mr. Officer, fince I have got my diamond, I am fatisfied. I don't defire to give this poor woman any further trouble: and would not even feek the death of a finner. "For shame! (said he) a man of your humanity would make a bad trooper: but I must acquit myself of my commission, by which I am exprelly ordered to apprehend these infantas: for the corregidor wants to make an example of them," For heaven's fake! (I replied) have fome regard to intreaty, and abate a little of your feverity, in confideration of the prefent which these ladies will offer. "Oh! that's another affair, (faid he) that is what we call a figure of rhetoric well placed-Come, let us fee what they have got to give me?" "I have (faid Camilla) a pearl-necklace, and ear-rings of a confiderable value." Here she was interrupted with, "Yes, " but if they come from the Philippine isles, "I'll have none of them." "You may take "them, upon my word, I'll warrant them " genuine," (faid she) at the same time defiring the old woman to bring a little box, out of which she took the necklace and earrings, and put them into the alguazil's hand. Tho' he knew no more of jewels than I did, he was perfuaded that the diamonds of the ear-rings were genuine, as well as the pearls of the necklace; therefore having examined them

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them attentively, "These jewels (said he) seem "to be of a good water, and provided the " filver candleftick, which Signior Gil Blas "has in his hand, be added to them, I won't "answer for my fidelity," I don't believe (said I to Camilla) that you will for a trifle, break off a treaty fo much to your advantage. So faying, I gave the light to the old woman, and the candlestick to Fabricius, who being fatisfied with what he had got, because (perhaps) he faw nothing else in the room which he could easily carry off, said to the ladies, "Adieu, my princesses, live in peace. I will " fpeak to the corregidor, and represent you "whiter than fnow: for fuch as we can give "what turn we please to things, and never " tell him the plain truth, except when we " are under no temptation to lie."

CHAP. V.

The sequel of the ring retrieved. Gil Blas quits the profession of physick, and makes his retreat from Valladolid.

A FTER having in this manner executed the scheme of Fabricius, we lest Camilla's lodgings, congratulating ourselves upon a piece of success that even surpass'd our expectation; for we had laid our account with recovering the ring only. However, we carried off the rest without ceremony; and, far from making a scruple of robbing curtezans, we thought we had done a meritorious action.

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"got into the street) it is my opinion that we should go back to the tavern, and spend the night in making merry. To morrow we will sell the candlestick, necklace, and ear-rings, and share the money like brothers; after which we will return to our feveral homes, and make the best excuse we can to our masters." This proposal of the alguazil seemed very reasonable to us all, we returned to the tavern, some of us believing we could easily find an excuse for having lain abroad, and others not caring when

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ther they should be dismis'd or no.

We ordered a good supper, and sat down to table with as much appetite as good humour. The repast was seasoned with a thoufand agreeable fallies; and Fabricius, in particular, enliven'd the conversation, and diverted us all extremely, by innumerable strokes replete with Castilian salt, which is equal at least to the antient Attic. - But while we were in this jovial disposition, our mirth was all of a fudden overcast by an unforeseen accident. A man of a pretty good mein entered the room were we were at supper, followed by two others of terrible aspect; after these three more appeared; and we counted no less than twelve who came in thus, three by three, armed with carabines, fwords, and bayonets. - We foon perceived them to be the foldiers of the patrole, and it was not difficult to guess their intention; wherefore we had some thoughts,

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thoughts, at first, of making resistance; but they furrounded us in an instant, and kept us in awe, as well by their numbers as their firearms.-" Gentlemen, (faid their commander " to us with a fneer) I know by what ingeni-" ous artifice you have recovered a ring from "the hands of a certain she-adventurer; and, " to be fure, the contrivance is excellent, and " richly deserves a public recompence, which " you shall by no means miss. - Justice has " already appointed an apartment for you in " her own house, and will not fail to reward " fuch a mafterly attempt." This difcourse very much disconcerted all those to whom it was address'd: our countenances changed, and we felt, in our turn, the same fear with which we had inspired Camilla. Fabricius, however, tho' pale and difmay'd, endeavoured to justify what we had done. "Sir, (faid he) as we " had no bad intention, this little trick might "be forgiven." "How the devil! (cried " the commandant in a rage) do you call this " a little trick? Don't you know that it is a "hanging matter? For, besides that no man " is allow'd to do justice to himself without the cognizance of the law, you have carried " off a candleftick, necklace and ear-rings " that did not belong to you; and which is " still worse, in order to commit that rob-"bery, you have difguised yourselves like "tipstaves. - Wretches! to dress yourselves " in the habit of fuch honourable people to " do mischief. I shall think you very lucky, H 5

" if you are only fentenced to the gallies." When he had convinced us that the affair was much more ferious than we at first imagined, we fell down together at his feet, acd begg'd he would have pity on our youth. But our prayers were unregarded; and befides, he rejected a proposal we made of quitting to him the necklace, ear-rings, and candleftick: even my ring was refused, because (I suppose) it was offered before too much company.-In short, he was quite inexorable; ordered my companions to be disarmed, and carried us all together to the public jail. In our way thither one of the guard told me, that the old woman who lived with Camilla, fuspecting that we were not the real foot-pads of justice, had followed us to the tavern; and there being confirmed in her opinion, had revenged herself upon us, by informing the patrole of the whole affair.

We were immediately plundered of every thing; the necklace, diamonds, and eandle-flick feized; as also my ring, together with the ruby of the Philippine Isles, which I had unfortunately in my pocket. They did not even spare the rials, which I had that day received for my prescriptions; which was a sure sign to me, that the people belonging to justice at Valladolid are as expert in their office as those at Astorga, and that the manners of all these gentlemen are every where alike. While I was risted of my jewels and cash, the officer of the patrole recounted our adventure to these agents of the plunder; and the affair seem'd

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to them of such a serious nature, that the majority thought we deserved a halter: but others, less severe, imagined we might get off for two hundred lashes each, and a few years service in the gallies. - Until the corregidor should think proper to decide our affair, we were lock'd up in a dungeon, where we lay upon straw, with which it was strew'd like a stable litter'd for horses. - Here we might have remained long enough, and at last exchanged our habitation for the gallies, had not Signior Manuel Ordonnez next day heard of our misfortune, and resolved to procure the liberty of Fabricius, which he could not do without obtaining also the dismission of us all. Being a man very much esteemed in the city, he did not spare follicitations; and partly by his own credit, and partly by that of his friends, at the end of three days effected our enlargement. But we did not come out as we had gone in; the candleftick, necklace, and ear-rings, my ring, ruby, and rials being detained: which made me remember those verses of Virgil, that begin with "Sic vos non vobis."

As foon as we were set at liberty we returned to our masters; and doctor Sangrado received me very kindly, saying, "My poor "Gil Blas, I did not hear of thy misfortune "till this morning, and was just going to "make strong sollicitations in thy behalf." Thou must console thyself, my friend, for "this accident, and attach thyself more than "ever to physick." "That is my design," H 6 (said

(faid I.) And truly I thought of nothing elfe. Far from wanting bufiness, it happened, as my master had foretold, that distempers were very rife, the small pox and putrid fever beginning to ravage the city and fuburbs; fo that all the physicians in Valladolid, and we in particular, had abundance of practice.-Scarce a day pass'd in which we did not visit eight or ten patients, each; from whence it may be eafily conceived what a quantity of blood was fpilt, and water drank. But, I do not know how it happened, all our fick died, either on account of our male-practice, or because their difeafes were incurable.—Certain it is, we very feldom had occasion to make three visits to one patient: at the second, we were either told that he was just going to be buried, or found him at the last gasp; and as I was but a young physician, who had not yet time to be inured to murder, I began to be very uneasy at the fatal events which might be laid to my charge.-Sir, (faid I, one evening, to Dr. Sangrado) "I take heaven to witness, that I follow your " method with the utmost exactness; yet ne-" vertheless, every one of my patients leaves " me in the lurch. It looks as if they took a " pleafure in dying, merely to bring our prac-"tice into discredit. This very day I met two " of them going to their long home." " Why " truly, child, (answered he) I have reason to " make pretty much the same observation: I " have not often the fatisfaction of curing " those who fall into my hands; and if I was

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" not so sure as I am of the principles on which "I proceed, I should think my remedies were " pernicious in almost all the cases that come "under my care." "If you will take my " advice, fir, (faid I) we will change our me-"thod, and give chymical preparations to our " patients, through curiofity; the worst that "can happen will only be, that they produce "the same effect that follows our bleedings " and warm water," "I would willingly " make that experiment, (he replied) provi-" ded it could have no bad consequence; but I " have published a book, in which I have ex-" tolled the use of frequent bleeding and aque-" ous draughts; and wouldst thou have me "go and decry my own work?" "Oh! you " are certainly in the right, (faid I) you must " not give your enemies fuch a triumph over "you: they would fay, you are at last disa-"bused: and therefore ruin your reputation: " perish rather the nobility, clergy and peo-" ple! and let us continue in our old path. "After all, our brother doctors, notwith-" standing their aversion for bleeding, perform "as few miracles as we do; and I believe their "drugs are no better than our specifics."

We went to work, therefore, afresh, and proceeded in such a manner, that in less than six weeks we made more widows and orphans than the siege of Troy. By the number of burials, one would have thought that the plague was in Valladolid; and every day, some father came to our house, to demand an ac-

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count of his fon, whom we had ravished from him, or some uncle, to upbraid us with his nephew's death. As for the fons and nephews, whose fathers and uncles we had dispatched, they never appeared to complain; the hufbands too were very civil, and never cavilled with us about the loss of their wives. But those afflicted people, whose reproaches we were obliged to undergo, were, fometimes, very brutal in their grief, and called us ignorant affaffins. As they did not spare me, in particular, I was afflicted by their epithets: but my mafter, who was used to such accidents, heard them without the least emotion. I might, perhaps, in time, have been accuftomed to reproach, as well as he, if heaven, doubtless, to rid the fick people in Valladolid of one of their most severe scourges, had not produced an occasion that gave me a disgust to physic, which I practised with so little succefs.

There was in our neighbourhood a tenniscourt, to which the idle people in town daily reforted, and, among the rest, one of your professed bullies, who take upon themselves the office of arbiters, and decide all differences that happen. He was from Biscay, his name Don Rodrigo de Mondragon, about thirty years of age, of an ordinary make, but lean and muscular; he had two little twinkling eyes, that rolled in his head, and threatened every body he looked at; a very stat nose, placed between red whiskers, that curled up

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to his very temples, and a manner of speaking fo rough and paffionate, that his words struck terror into every body. This racket-breaker had made himfelf tyrant of the tennis-court, where he judged all the disputes that happened among those who played, in the most imperious manner, and no man durft appeal from his decision, unless he could resolve to fight him next day. Such as I have described Don Rodrigo, who, notwithstanding the Don he had prefixed to his name, was an arrant rascal, he captivated the mistress of the tennis-court, who was a woman about forty years of age, rich and agreeable enough, and in the fifteenth month of her widowhood. I know not how he won her heart; for, doubtlefs, it was not by his beauty; but furely, by that je ne sçai quoy which cannot be expressed. Be that as it will, she had a passion for him, and actually defigned to take him for her husband; but while preparations were making for the confummation of that affair, she fell sick, and unhappily employed me as her physician. If her diftemper had not been a malignant fever, my prescriptions were sufficient to endanger her life; so that, in four days, I filled the tennis-court with mourning; the mistress went the way of all my patients, and her relations took possession of her estate. Don Rodrigo, made desperate by the loss of his mistress, or rather by being baulked in his expectation of a very advantageous match, not only curfed and reviled me, but also swore, that he would run me

me through the body, whenever he could catch me, and exterminate me from the face of the earth. A charitable neighbour informed me of this oath, and advised me not to stir abroad, for fear of meeting this devil of a man. This advice, which I had no intention to neglect, filled me with confusion and dismay: I fancied incessantly, that I saw this furious Biscayan coming into the house; and could not enjoy one moment's repose. This effectually detached me from physic, and my sole care was how to free myself from disquiet: I resumed my embroidered fuit, and after having bid adieu to my mafter, who could not perfuade me to ftay, quitted the city at day-break, not without apprehension of meeting Don Rodrigo in my way.

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CHAP. VI.

Of his route when he left Valladolid; and the perfon he joined on his road.

I Walked very fast, looking behind me from time to time, to see if this formidable Biscayan was not at my heels; my imagination being so much possessed by that fellow, that I took every tree or bush I saw for him; and every moment felt my heart throb with fear. I plucked up my courage, however, when I had gone a good league, and continued at an easier pace, my journey towards Madrid, whither my purpose was to go. I should have quitted Valladolid without regret, had I not been

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been forry to part from Fabricius, my dear Pylades, to whom I could not so much as bid adieu: but it gave me no mortification to renounce physic; on the contrary, I begged pardon of God for having exercised it at all; though I did not fail to count, with pleasure, the money I had in my purse, notwithstandingits being the falary of my affaffinations: in that respect, resembling those ladies of pleasure, who reform their morals, but, nevertheless; keep fast hold of the wages of sin. My whole fortune amounted to pretty near the value of five ducats, in rials; on the strength of which, I expected to reach Madrid, where I did not doubt of finding some good place: besides, I longed passionately to see that august city, which had been extolled to me as the epitome of all the wonders of the world.

While I recollected all that I had heard in its praise, and enjoyed its pleasures by anticipation, I heard the voice of a man behind me. finging at full stretch: he had a leathern wallet on his back, a guitare hanging about his neck, a long fword by his fide, and walked fo faft, that he was up with me in a very short time. Being one of the two journeymen barbers, with whom I had been imprisoned in the adventure of the ring, we knew one another immediately, though our drefs was altered, and were very much furprized at meeting fo unexpectedly on the highway. I affured him that I was extremely glad to have him for a fellowtraveller, and his joy seemed no less at meeting with

with me. I told him my reason for quitting Valladolid; and he reposed the same confidence in me, by letting me know that he had quarrelled with his mafter, and bid him an eternal adieu. "If I had been inclined (add-" ed he) to live any longer in Valladolid, I " could have found employment in abundance " of shops; for, without vanity, I can han-"dle a razor, and curl a mustachio, as well " as e'er a barber in Spain: but I could no " longer resist the violent desire I had to visit " the place of my nativity, from which I " have been absent these ten years: I want to " breathe my own country air a little, and " know the fituation of my family, with " whom I hope to be in two days; for they " live at a place called Olmedo, a market-

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" town on this fide of Segovia."

Resolving to accompany this barber to his own home, and from thence go to Segovia, in order to take the opportunity of some convenience to Madrid, we pursued our journey, and discoursed of indifferent subjects. He was a young fellow of some wit and humour; and when we had conversed together an hour, he asked how my stomach was disposed: I answered, that he should see at the first inn. Upon which he said, "We had better make a pause in the mean time: I have something for breakfast, in my wallet; for when I trawel, I always take care to have provision along with me: I don't trouble myself with cloaths, linnen, and other useless baggage;

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" but resolving to have nothing superfluous, " fill my knapfack with belly-timber, my ra-"zors, and a wash-ball." I commended his prudence, and confented, with all my heart, to the pause he proposed; for I was hungry, and resolved to make a good meal, which I could not but expect, after what he had told me. We turned a little out of the highway, in order to fit upon the grafs, where my friend the barber took out his victuals, confifting of five or fix onions, with a few crusts of bread and cheese; but what he produced as the best furniture of his budget, was a little bottle full (as he faid) of delicate wine. Though our diffes were not very favoury, hunger, being very urgent with us both, made them relish pretty well; and we emptied the bottle, which contained about two pints, of a fort of wine that I don't chuse to boast much of after which, we got up, and continued our journey with great good humour. The barber, who had been informed by Fabricius that I had met with some very particular adventures, defired to hear them from my own mouth; a fatisfaction I could not refuse to a man who had regaled me so sumptuously. When I had gratified his curiofity, I told him he could do no less, in return for my complaisance, than recount the story of his own life. "Oh! as " for my story, (cried he) it is not worth hear-"ing, as it contains nothing but ordinary " facts: nevertheless, (added he) fince we have " nothing else to do, you shall hear it, such

164 The ADVENTURES of "as it is." So faying, he related it, nearly in these words.

CHAP. VII.

The story of the journeyman barber.

Erdinand Peres de la Fuenta, my grandfather, (I go to the fountain-head) after having been fifty years barber in the village of Olmedo, died, and left four fons, the eldest of whom took possession of his shop, and succeeded him in the business; Bertrand, the second, having an inclination for trade, became a mercer; Thomas who was the third, kept a school; and the fourth, whose name was Pedro, feeling himself born for the belles lettres, fold a little lot of ground, which he had for his patrimony, and went to live at Madrid, where he hoped, one day, to diftinguish himfelf by his wit and learning; while his three brothers did not separate, but settling at Olmedo, married the daughters of husbandmen, who, in lieu of fortune, brought them abundance of children, breeding as if it had been for a wager. My mother, the barber's wife, brought fix into the world, for her share, in the first five years of her marriage, of which number I am one. My father taught me betimes to shave, and when I arrived at the age of fifteen, put this wallet upon my shoulders, and girding me with a long fword, said, "Go, " Diego, thou art now in a condition to gain "a livelihood: go and fee the world: thou haft ce f

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"hast occasion for a little travelling, to rub
"thee up, and make thee perfect in thy bu"finess. March, and don't return to Olme"do, before thou hast made a tour of Spain.
"Let me not hear from thee until this be
"performed." At these words, he embraced
me very affectionately, and turned me out of

doors.

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Such was the behaviour of my father at parting with me. But my mother, whose manners were not quite so rough, seemed more affected on this occasion: she let fall some tears, and even flipt a ducat privately into my hand. So I quitted Olmedo, and took the road to Segovia; of which, however, I had not walked above two hundred paces, when I stopt to examine my knapsac, being desirous of feeing what it contained, and of knowing precisely the extent of my possession. I found a case and two razors, so much wore, that they feemed to have shaved two generations, with a thong of leather to fet them, and a lump of foap: besides, there was a canvas shirt quite new, an old pair of my father's shoes, and, what gave me more pleasure than all the rest, twenty rials wrapt in a linnen rag. This was my whole fortune, by which you may conclude, that master Nicholas the barber relied a good deal on my skill, since he sent me away so poorly provided. Nevertheless, the possession of a ducat and twenty rials did not fail to charm a young fellow like me, who had never before been master of coin: I believed believed my funds were inexhauftible, and continued my journey in a transport of joy, admiring, every moment, the hilt of my sword, which thumped against my hams, or got be-

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tween my legs, at every step.

Arriving at the village of Ataquines, in the evening, very fharp fet, I went to lodge at an inn, and, as if I had been a man of fortune, called for supper, with an air of authority: the landlord having furveyed me fome time, and feeing who he had to do with, faid, in a very obliging manner, "Mafter, " you fhall be fatisfied; we will treat you like " a prince." So faying, he flewed me into a little room; where, in a quarter of an hour, they brought me a ragout made of ram cat, which I eat as greedily as if it had been composed of a rabbit or hare. This excellent dish was accompanied with wine, so good, as he faid, that the king himfelf could not drink better. Notwithstanding this elogium, I perceived it was curfedly four; but this did not hinder me from doing as much honour to it, as I had already done to the ragout: and, to compleat the treatment of a prince, I was conducted to a couch, more proper for encouraging watchfulness than sleep; being a trucklebed fo narrow and short, that, little as I was I had not room to lie in it with my legs extended; befides, instead of mattrals and feather-bed, it had only a wretched flock-bed, covered with a doubled sheet, which had served an hundred different travellers, at least, fince

"Guevara

fince the last washing. Nevertheless, in such a convenience, my stomach full of ragout, and that delicious wine which the landlord had recommended, thanks to my youth and constitution, I enjoyed a found sleep, and spent the night without indicastion.

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Next day, after having breakfasted, and paid fauce for my good cheer, I made but one stage to Segovia; and, on my first arrival, had the good fortune to be employed in a shop for my board and lodging: here, however, I stayed but fix months; being seduced by a brother journeyman of my acquaintance, who longed to see Madrid; and with whom I set out for that city. There I got a place on the fame terms as at Segovia, in a well accustomed shop, much frequented on account of the neighbourhood of the church of Santa Cruz, and the prince's theatre: my master, two journeymen and I, being scarce sufficient to trim all our customers, who consisted of people of all ranks, and, among others, of players and authors. One day, two persons of the last profession, being there together, began to discourse about the poetry and poets of the time, and hearing them mention the name of my uncle, I listened to their conversation with great attention. "Don Juan de Zava-" leta (faid one of them) is an author, in my " opinion, beneath the public notice: a cold " genius, a man without fancy: his last piece " has done him infinite prejudice." And pray, " (faid the other) has ever Lewis Velez de

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"Guevara produced a good work? was ever " any thing more wretched than his perfor-" mances?" They named a great many more poets, whom I have forgot. I remember only, that they spoke contemptuously of them all, except my uncle, of whom they made honourable mention, agreeing that he was a lad of merit. "Yes, (faid one of them) "Don Pedro de la Fuenta is an excellent "writer: his books contain a delicate raillery " mixed with erudition, which makes them " agreeably fatirical; and I am not at all fur-" prized at his being esteemed by the court " and city, or at his receiving falaries from " feveral grandees." " He has, indeed, (faid "the other) enjoyed a pretty large income "these many years; and as he lives with the "duke of Medina Celi, and spends little, "must be worth a considerable sum of mo-" ney."

I did not lose one word which the poets said concerning my uncle, who, we had heard in the family, made a noise in Madrid, by his works, some people travelling through Olmedo having told us so; but as he neglected to let us hear from him, and seemed quite detached from his relations, we, on our part, lived in as great indifference towards him. True blood is, however, always guided by a fure instinct: as soon as I heard that he was in good circumstances, and knew where he lodged, I was tempted to wait upon him: though one thing embarassed me not a little; his

ever forоге onnem ade as a em) lent lery nem furourt om faid me the tle, nofaid l in his neto deart, ım. y a vas he m: le; his

his being called Don Pedro by the authors. That Don gave some uneafiness, and I was afraid he might be some other poet than my uncle. I was not, however, stopt by this consideration; but imagined that he might have been enobled on account of his wit, and therefore resolved to go and see him. For this purpose, with my master's permission, I dreffed myfelf one morning, as well as I could, and went out of the shop, not a little proud of being nephew to a man who had acquired fuch reputation by his genius. As the barbers are not the least vain people in the world, I began to conceive a great opinion of myself, and, strutting with an haughty air, enquired for the house of the Duke de Medina Celi, where presenting myself at the gate, and saying, I wanted to speak with Don Pedro de la Fuenta, the porter pointed with his finger to a little stair-case, at the further end of a court, which he bid me ascend, and knock at the first door on my right hand: I did so, and (a young man coming out) asked if Signior Don Pedro de la Fuenta lodged there. "Yes, " (faid he) but you cannot see him at pre-"fent." "I should be very glad (I replied) " to speak with him; for I bring him news " of his family." " If you could bring him " news of the pope, (faid he) I would not "introduce you to his chamber just now; " for he is composing; and when that is the " case, we must take care not to disturb his " imagination: he will not be visible till noon; VOL. I.

" so that you may go and take a turn, and

" come back about that time."

I took his advice, and walked through the city, the whole morning, thinking continually on the reception I should meet with from my uncle, who I imagined would be extremely glad to see me: I judged of his sentiments by my own, and preparing myfelf for a very tender scene, returned to his lodgings, with all diligence, at the hour prescribed. "You are " come in the very nick of time, (faid his "valet) for my mafter is just going out; " ftay here a minute, and I will let him know "you are come." So faying, he left me in an outward room, and returning in a moment conducted me into the chamber of his mafter. whose face had so much of our family air in it, that I was struck with the resemblance, and could not help thinking, it was my very uncle Thomas, whom I had left at home. Having faluted him with profound respect, I told him I was the fon of master Nicolas de la Fuenta, barber in Olmedo; that I had worked at my father's business these three weeks at Madrid, in quality of a journeyman; and that I intended to make the tour of Spain for my improvement. While I spoke, my uncle feemed to muse, considering, in all likelihood, whether he should disown me for his nephew, or get rid of me in a more dexterous manner. He chose this last method, and affecting a fmiling air, faid, "Well, my " friend, how do thy father and uncles? " hope

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" hope they are in good circumstances." Upon this, I began to describe the plentiful propagation of our family; I told him the names of all the children, male and female, and even comprehended in that lift their godfathers and godmothers. He did not feem to interest himself infinitely in my detail, but coming to his purpose, replied, "Diego, I approve very "much of thy resolution to travel, in order " to make thee perfect in thy profession; and "I advise thee to leave Madrid as soon as " possible: it is a pernicious place for youth, " in which thou wilt be ruined, my child: " It will be more for thy advantage to relide " in some of the other cities of the kingdom, " where people's morals are not fo much cor-"rupted. Go, (added he) and, when thou " art ready to fet out, come and fee me again; "I will give thee a pistole to help thee to " make the tour of Spain." With thefe words, he pushed me gently out of his chamber, and fent me about my bufiness.

I had not fense enough to perceive that he wanted to remove me at a good distance from him; but going to our shop, gave my master an account of what had passed; he was as far from discovering the intention of Signior Don Pedro as I was, and faid, "I am not at all of "your uncle's opinion: instead of advising "you to travel, he ought rather, I think, " to make it your interest to stay in this city; " for, being intimate with fo many persons " of quality, he can eafily fettle you in some

great

" great family, and put you in a condition to " make your fortune." Struck with this difcourfe, which flattered my imagination, in two days I went back to my uncle, and proposed, that he should employ his credit, to procure admission for me into the family of fome lord belonging to the court. But this proposal was not at all to his liking: a vain man like him, who had free access to the great, and eat every day at their tables, could not brook his nephew's fitting with the fervants, while he dined with their lords; in this case, little Diego would have made Signior Don Pedro blush. He did not fail therefore, to refuse my request, and that not in the most civil manner. "How! you little "vagabond, (said he, with a furious look) "wouldst thou quit thy profession? Go, I " abandon thee to those who have given thee " fuch pernicious counsel: get out of my apart-" ment, and never fet foot in it again, other-" wife I will cause thee to be chastised as thou "deservest." Confounded at these words, and still more at the tone in which they were delivered, I retired, with the tear in my eye, very much affected at his harsh behaviour; but as I was naturally brisk and haughty, I foon dried my tears; my grief changed to indignation, and I resolved to take no further notice of this unkind relation, without whose affistance I had, hitherto, made shift to live.

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My whole thought being now bent on cultivating my talent, I applied to business, shaved all day long, and in the evening learned to play on the guitarre, by way of recreation. My master for that instrument was an old Signior Escudero *, whose beard I trimmed, and who taught me music, which he understood perfectly well, having been formerly quirifter in a cathedral. His name was Marcos de Obregon, a fage person, who had a large flock of fense, as well as experience, and loved me as well as if I had been his own child. He served in quality of usher to a physician's wife, who lived within thirty paces of our house, whither I used to go in the twilight, when we had left off working: and fitting together, on the threshold of the door, we used to make a little concert, not at all difagreeable to the neighbours: not that our voices were exquisite, but while we thrummed upon the instrument, each of us, in our turn, accompanied it with finging, and that was fufficient to please our audience. In particular, we diverted Donna Mergellina, the physician's wife, who used to come into the passage to hear us, and sometimes made us repeat the airs that were most to her liking; her husband not being offended at her enjoying this diverfion; for though he was a Spaniard, and already well stricken in years, he was not jealous: his profession engrossed him wholly,

^{*} Escudero: a squire to wait on a gentlewoman.

and as he returned fatigued from his patients in the evening, he went to bed betimes, without being alarmed at his wife's attention to our concerts: 'tis probable, indeed, that he did not think them capable of making dangerous impressions; and we must observe, that he imagined he had little or no cause to fear; Mergellina being young and handsome, 'tis true, but withal fo favagely virtuous, that she could not fo much as endure the look of a man. He did not, therefore, begrudge her a pastime that seemed so innocent and honourable, but left us to fing as much as we pleafed. One evening when I came to the physician's door, with an intention to play as usual, I found the old fquire expecting me, who taking me by the hand, faid he wanted to take a turn with me before we should begin our concert; then leading me into a by-ftreet, where he found we could talk with freedom, "Son Diego, (faid he, with a melancholy " air) I have fomething extraordinary to dif-" close: I am afraid, my child, that we both " fhall have cause to repent of amusing our-" felves in the evening, with concerts at my " master's door. I have, doubtless, a great " friendship for you, and am very well pleased " with having taught you to play upon the " guitarre, and fing; but had I foreseen the " misfortune that threatens us, please God! "I would have given you your lessons in some " other place !" Frightened at this discourse, I begged the usher to be more explicit, and tell nts

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tell me what we had to fear; for I was not a man who could brave danger; nor had I, as yet, made the tour of Spain. "I will (faid "he) tell you what is necessary to be known, "that you may comprehend the jeopardy in "which we are. When I entered into the " fervice of the physician, which is about a "year ago, he faid to me one morning, after " having brought me into the presence of his " wife, "Marcos, behold your mistress: this " is the lady whom you are to attend every "where." I admired Donna Mergellina, I " thought her wonderful pretty, excessively " handsome, and was particularly charmed with the agreeable air that diffused itself "through her whole mien: "Sir, (answered I " to the physician) I am too happy in being re permitted to ferve fuch a charming lady." Mergellina, disgusted at my answer, said in a passion, " A pretty fellow, indeed! methinks "you take a great deal of liberty. - I want "none of your compliments - not I." Such " words from a mouth fo agreeable, furprifed " me very much; I could not reconcile this " ruftic and infolent manner of speaking with " the gentle appearance of my mistress: but "her hufband, who was used to it, rejoiced " at his having a wife of fuch a rare cha-" racter, told me that his spouse was a pro-"digy of virtue; and perceiving that she put " on her veil, and prepared to go to mass, " bade me conduct her to church. We were " no sooner in the street, than we met (which " is T 4

" is not at all extraordinary) feveral gentle-" men, who, struck with the fine air of Don-" na Mergellina, paid her a great many com-" pliments, en passant. She replied to them " all; but you cannot imagine how filly and " ridiculous her answers were. Every body " was aftonished, and could not conceive that " there was a woman in the world who could " be displeased with praise. " Madam, (said " I to her) take no notice of what is faid to "you; it is better to keep silence, than to " ipeak in passion." " No, no, (answered " she) I will let these insolent fellows know "that I won't be treated with difrespect." " In fhort, fo much impertinence escaped her, "that I could not help telling her my fenti-" ments, at the hazard of her displeasure. I " represented to her, as delicately as I could, " that she perverted nature, and spoiled a "thousand good qualities by her savage hu-mour; that a woman of politeness and " good-nature, might inspire love without the "help of beauty; whereas, the handsomest " person in the world, without meekness and " good-breeding, would become the object of " contempt. Istrengthened these arguments " with many more of the same kind, calcu-" lated for the reformation of her behaviour; " and after having moralized a good deal, I " was afraid that my freedom would enrage " my mistress, and bring upon me some se-" vere repartee: nevertheless, she did not re-" bel against my remonstrance, but contented " herself " herself with neglecting it entirely, as well as all the rest that I was afterwards foolish

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"At length I forbore to advise her of "her faults, and abandoned her to the fero-"city of her nature. Mean while, (would " you believe it?) this ferocious disposition, "this haughty woman, is, within these two "months, entirely changed; she is complai-" fant to every body, and her behaviour most " agreeable; she is not the same Mergellina " who made fuch filly answers to the men that " faid obliging things to her; she is become " sensible to praise; loves to be called hand-" fome, and told that a man cannot look upon "her with impunity; and flattery is now as " agreeable to her as to any other woman; the "change is scarce credible: and, what will " furprize you still more, you are the author of such a great miracle! Yes, my dear Die-" go, (continued the usher) you have meta-" morphofed Donna Mergellina in this man-" ner, and converted that tigress into a lamb. " In one word, you have attracted her notice: "I have perceived it more than once, and I " am very much mistaken in the fex, if she " has not conceived a most violent passion for "you. This, my child, is the fad piece of " news I had to disclose, and the troublesome " dilemma in which we are.

"I can't see (said I to the old man) that we have so much cause to be afflicted at this affair, or that it is a missortune for me to

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" be beloved by a handsome lady." "Diego! (he replied) you talk like a young " man: you look only at the bait, without " perceiving the hook; you confider only the " pleasure, but I foresee the disagreeable con-" fequences. All will come to light in the "end. If you continue coming to fing at " our door, you will inflame the paffion of "Mergellina, who, perhaps, lofing all re-" straint, will betray her weakness before her "hufband doctor Olorofo; and he, who ap-" pears fo complaisant at present, because he "believes he has no reason to be jealous, will " become furious, revenge himself upon her, " and, in all probability, make both you and " me feel the effects of his rage." "Why, " truly, (faid I) Signior Marcos, your reasons " are convincing, and I submit myself wholly " to your advice: give me, therefore, direc-"tions how to behave, in order to prevent " mischief." "We have nothing to do, (an-" fwered he) but to give over our concert: "appear no more before my mistress; and "when you are no longer feen, she will re-"trieve her quiet. Stay at your master's " house, whither I will come, and we will " play upon the guitarre, without danger."
"With all my heart, (faid I) and I promise " never to fet foot within your door again." I resolved, in good earnest, to be as good as my word, and, for the future, to keep myself close in the shop, since the sight of me was so

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In the mean time, honest Marcos, with all his prudence, found, in a very few days, that the means he had contrived, to extinguish the flame of Donna Mergellina, produced a quite contrary effect. This lady, not having heard me fing for two nights fuccessively, asked him, why we had discontinued our concert, and for what reason I no longer appeared? He replied, I was so busy, that I had not a moment to beflow on my pleasures. She seemed satisfied with this excuse, and for three days more supported my absence with fortitude enough; but at the end of that time, my princess lost all patience, and faid to her squire, "You de-"ceive me, Marcos; Diego must have some "other reason for not coming hither: there is " fome mystery in it, which I must have ex-"plained: speak therefore, I order you, and "conceal nothing of the truth." "Madam, " (answered he, making use of another expe-" dient) fince you must know the truth, I will " tell you, that he commonly found supper "over, when he went home, after our con-"cert; and he does not chuse to run the risk " of going to bed with an empty stomach." "How! with an empty stomach? (cried she, with marks of uneafinefs,) why had not you told me this fooner? Go to bed supperless! poor baby! Go to him instantly, and bring him hither this very evening. He shan't go home with an empty ftomach: there shall always be a place of fomething referved for him." " What 16

"What do I hear? (faid the usher, affect-" ing furprise at her discourse) Heavens, what " a change! Is it you, madam, that talk thus? "How long have you been thus gentle and " compaffionate? "How long! (replied she, hastily) fince your abode in this house; or rather fince you condemned my disdainful carriage, and laboured to foften the roughness of my behaviour. But alas! (added she, in a melting strain,) I have passed from one extremity to another! from being haughty and infensible, I am become too soft and tender! I love your young friend Diego, in spite of all my efforts to the contrary; and his absence, instead of weakening, adds new vigour to my love!"-" Is it possible, (faid the old man) that " a lad who is neither handsome nor genteel; " should be the object of such a violent pas-" fion? I would forgive your fentiments had "they been inspired by some gentleman of " shining accomplishments." "Ah, Marcos! (faid Mergellina, interrupting him) I don't refemble the rest of my sex - or rather, notwithstanding all your long experience, you are but little acquainted with women, if you think that merit always determines their choice. If I may be allowed to judge by myself, deliberation has no share in their engagements, love is a diforder of the mind, by which we are involuntarily dragged and fastened to the object—it is a diftemper by which we are feized as dogs are with madness: cease therefore to represent Diego as unworthy of my tenderness:

ness: let it suffice that my love finds in him a thousand good qualities which escape your notice, and, perhaps, only exist in my imagination. It is vain for you to tell me, that neither his features nor his make deserve the least attention. He seems to me born to captivate, and fairer than the day! besides, he has a sweetness of voice that charms me, and in my opinion plays on the guitarre with a grace peculiar to himself." "But, madam, (replied Marcos) do "you consider who this Diego is? the mean-"ness of his condition?" "Mine is not much higher than his; (said she, interrupting him again) and if I was even a woman of quality, that should be no objection."

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The refult of this conversation was, that the usher thinking he should make little progress with his remonstrances, ceased to oppose the infatuation of his mistress; as an expert pilot yields to the storm that drives him from the port in wiew. He did more for the satisfaction of his patroness; for coming to me, he took me aside, and having recounted what passed between her and him; "You fee, Diego, (added he) that we cannot help continuing our concert at Mergellina's door. There is a necessity for that lady's seeing you again, my friend; otherwise she will commit some piece of indifcretion, that may do infinite prejudice to her reputation." I was not hard-hearted, but told Marcos, I would in the twilight repair to the place of affignation, with my guitarre, and that he might go and regale his mistress with this agreeable piece of news. In this he did not fail; and that passionate inamorata was ravished to understand that she should have the pleasure of seeing and hearing me that very

evening.

A difagreeable accident, however, had wellnigh baulked her expectation. For I could not leave the shop before night, which, for my fins, was extremely dark; and as I groped along the street, and had got about half way to the place of rendezvous, I was crowned, from a window, with the contents of a perfuming-pan, that did not at all delight my fense of smelling; though I may safely say, I lost none of it, so exactly was I equipt. this condition, I did not know what course to take. Had I returned to the shop, I should have afforded a very diverting scene to my comrades, and expeled myfelf to a thousand unfavoury jefts; and I was shocked at the thought of going in this fine pickle to Mergellina: this laft, however, I resolved upon, and going to the phylician's house, found the old fquire waiting for me at the door. When he told me that doctor Olorofo being in bed, we might freely divert ourselves; I answered, 1 must first clean my cloaths; and then related my misfortune: he fympathized with me, and conducted me into a hall where his miftress was, who no fooner learned my adventure, and faw my condition, than she grieved for me as much as if I had met with the greatest misfortune; and bestowed a thousand curses on the person who had thus accommodated me. "But, madam, (faid Marcos to her) mode-" rate

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"rate your transports; and consider that this
event being the pure effect of chance, ought
not to be so deeply resented." "Why should
not I (answered she) deeply resent the injury
that has been done to this poor lamb, this
dove without gall, who does not even complain of the outrage he has received? Othat I
was a man this moment to revenge it!"

She faid a thousand things more that denoted the excess of her love, which the made appear no lefs by her actions; for while Marcos was busied in wiping me with a towel, she ran to her chamber and fetched from it a box full of all forts of perfumes; fweetening my cloaths with the fcent of odoriferous drugs which fhe burned, and afterwards sprinkling them all over with effences. The fumigation and afperfion performed, this charitable lady went herself into the kitchen for some bread, wine, and flices of roafted mutton which she had fer apart for my entertainment; and obliging me to eat, took pleasure in serving me, sometimes by cutting my victuals, and fometimes by filling wine; in spite of all that Marcos and I could fay to diffuade her from fuch condefcenfion. When I had supped, we gentlemen of the band began to tune our voices to our guitarres, and performed a concert that charmed Mergellina. We affected, indeed, to fing those airs, the words of which flattered her passion; and it must be observed, that while I fung, I frequently ogled her with the tail of my eye, in such a manner, as blew the coals of love;

love; for I began to be pleased with the game. Although the concert lasted a long time, I was not at all tired, and as for the lady, to whom the hours feemed minutes, she would willingly have fpent the night in hearing us; had not the old usher, to whom the minutes seemed hours, put her in mind of its being late. This she gave him the trouble to repeat ten or twelve times; but she had to do with one who was indefatigable on that fubject, and who gave her no rest, until I was gone. This experienced person, seeing his mistress abandoned to a foolish passion, was afraid of some cross accident; and his fear was foon justified: for the doctor either suspecting some secret intrigue, or agitated by the demon of jealoufy, who had respected him hitherto, took it in his head to find fault with our concerts, which he forbad in a peremptory manner, and, without giving any reason for his disgust, declared that for the future, he would fuffer no strangers to come within his doors.

Marcos advertised me of this declaration, which was particularly intended for me, and mortised me not a little; for I had conceived hopes I was forry to forego. Nevertheless, that I may act the faithful historian, I will own that I bore my misfortune with patience. This was not the case with Mergellina, whose sentiments were more inslamed than ever. "My dear Marcos! (said she to her usher) from you alone I expect assistance: fall upon some method, I beg of you, to bring Diego and me together

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together in private." "What do you ask! cried the old man, in a rage. I have been already but too complaisant, and will not undertake, by gratifying your filly passion, to dishonour my master, ruin your reputation, and intail infamy upon myself. I, who have always maintained the character of an irreproachable domestic! I will rather quit your family than ferve you in fuch a shameful manner." " Ah, Marcos! (cried the lady, interrupting him, and frightened at his last words) you pierce my very heart, when you talk of leaving me! Cruel man! are you going to forfake me now, after having reduced me to this condition! Give me back my former pride, and that favageness of disposition you have deprived me of! Why do I not still possess these happy defects, which would have preferved my tranquility: whereas, your indifcreet remonstrances have robbed me of the repose I enjoyed! You have corrupted my morals, by endeavouring to correct them.—But what do I say, (added she) wretch that I am! why do I reproach you unjustly! No, my father, you are not the author of my misfortune, which cruel fate alone decrees! Don't therefore take notice, I conjure you, of the extravagant discourse that escapes Alas! my paffion diforders my understanding! Have pity on my weakness, you are all my comfort, and if you have any regard for my life, do not refuse your assistance.

At these words, her tears redoubling in such a manner that she could not go on, she cover-

ed her face with her handkerchief, and threw herfelf upon a chair, like a person sinking under affliction. Old Marcos, who was perhaps the best foul of an usher that ever lived, could not refift fuch a moving fight, which affected him fo much, that he even mingled his tears with those of his mistress, and said, with an air of tenderness, "Ah, madam, how bewitching you are! I am not proof against your forrow! My virtue is vanquished, and I promise you my affiftance. I am not furprifed that love has been able to make you forget your duty; when pity only has fevered me from mine." Accordingly, the usher, in spite of his irreproachable conduct, devoted himfelf very obligingly to the passion of Mergellina, and having come one morning to inform me of what had happened, told me at parting, that he had already concerted a plan for procuring a fecret interview between the lady and me. This re-animated my hope, but in less than two hours after, I received a piece of very bad news. A journeyman apothecary in the neighbourhood, one of our customers, came in to be shaved, and while I prepared the lather, faid, "Signior Diego, what is the matter with your friend, the old squire, Marcos de Obregon? Do you know that he is going to leave doctor Oloroso? Upon my answering in the negative, he refumed, "It is certainly true: he is to be dismissed this very day: his master and mine have been just talking on that fubject, while I was by; and to the best of my rememhrew un-

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remembrance, their conversation was thus: "Signior Apuntador, (faid the physician) I " have a favour to ask: being diffatisfied with " an old usher who has ferved me some time, " I want to put my wife under the direction " of a faithful, fevere, and vigilant duenna." " I understandyou, (faid my master, interrupting him) you have occasion for Dame Melancia, who was my wife's governance, and has lived in the family these fix weeks that I have been a widower. Tho' she is very useful to me in housekeeping, I yield her to you, on account of my concern for your honour. may depend upon her for the fafety of your forehead: she is a jewel of a duenna *, and a very dragon to guard the chastity of the female fex: during the whole term of twelve years that she was with my wife, who, you know, was both young and handsome, I never saw so much as the shadow of a gallant in my house. No, faith! it was no place for them to play pranks in, and let me tell you, the defunct, in the beginning, had a ftrong propenfity to coquetry: but Dame Melancia foon reclaimed, and inspired her with a taste for virtue. In a word, fhe is a treasure, and you will thank me more than once for the prefent I make of her." The doctor was rejoiced at this encomium, and Signior Apuntador and he are agreed,

^{*} The duennas are discreet semales of approved fidelity, to whose care the Spaniards commit the chastity of their wives and daughters. — an office happily excluded from this land of virtuous, freedom.

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the place of the old usher.

This piece of news, which I believed, and was certainly true, difturbed the ideas of pleafure with which I had begun again to regale myself; and Marcos, in the afternoon, confounded them effectually, by confirming the report of the journeyman apothecary. "My " dear Diego, (said the honest usher) I am "very glad that doctor Oloroso has dismis-" fed me. A circumstance that spares me "a great deal of trouble: for, I not only "found myself engaged in a bad employ-" ment; but likewise under a necessity of con-" triving tricks and stratagems to bring Mer-" gellina and you together in private. What "a dilemma had I brought myself into! "Thank heaven, I am freed from those trou-" blesome cares, and the dangers that attend "them! For your part, my fon, you ought "to confole yourself for the loss of a few " fweet moments, which might have been " followed by numberless forrows." I relished the reflection of Marcos, because I no longer had any hopes; and thought no more of the affair. I confess, I was not one of those stubborn lovers who are animated by the obstacles in their way: but had I been such an one, Dame Melancia was enough to make me quit my pursuit: for the character I had heard of that duenna feemed capable of driving any gallant to despair. Nevertheless, in whatever colours she had been painted to me, I learned

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tearned two or three days after, that the doctor's wife had either lulled this Argus, or corrupted her fidelity. As I went out to shave one of our neighbours, a decent old woman stopping me in the street, asked if my name was not Diego de la Fuenta: when I answered, Yes. "Well, then, (faid she) you are "the person I want. Come this night to "Donna Mergellina's door, and make fome "fignal by which you may be known and " admitted into the house." " Very well, (said I to her) we must first agree upon the signal. I can mimick a cat charmingly, and will mew feveral times." "That's enough (repli-" ed this she-Mercury) I will report your an-"fwer. Your fervant Signior Diego - Hea-"ven bless you -- How handsome you are! "By St. Agnes, if I were but fifteen years "old, I would not chuse to engage you for "others." So faying, the officious beldame went away.

You may well think that I was furiously agitated by this message. Adieu the reservior of Marcos! I expected night with the utmost impatience, and when I thought doctor Oloroso might be asseep, went to her door, where I mewed so loud as to be heard at a good distance, and did great honour to the master who taught me such a polite art. In a moment, Mergellina herself having opened the door softly and let me in, shut it again in the same manner; and we went together into the hall where our last concert was held, and which

which was lighted by a fmall lamp that glimmer'd in the chimney: we fat down close by one another, for the benefit of conversing more at our ease; and were both very much affected: with this difference, however, that pleafure alone was the occasion of her emotion: while mine partook a little of fear. My princess in vain affured me, that we had nothing to dread on account of her husband: I was feized with a fit of shivering that disturbed my joy. " Madam, (faid I to her) how have " you been able to deceive the vigilance of " your governante? After what I had heard " of Dame Melancia, I did not think it pos-" fible for you to find means to let me hear " from you, much less to give me a personal " interview." Donna Mergellina, smiling at my discourse, answered, "You will cease to be " furprifed at the private opportunity we now "enjoy, after I have told you what paffed " between my duenna and me. When she 40 came first into the family, my husband load-" ed her with civilities, and faid to me, Mer-" gellina, I commit you to the conduct of " this discreet gentlewoman, who is a sum-" mary of all the virtues: a mirror which " you must always have before your eyes, " for your improvement in wisdom: this ad-" mirable person governed an apothecary's " wife (a friend of mine) twelve years; and "that in fuch an uncommon manner, that " she became a kind of saint, under her in-" ftruction."

This encomium, which the fevere look of Dame Melancia did not belie, cost me a world of tears, and threw me into despair. I represented to myself the lectures I must hear from morn to night, and the rebukes I must every day undergo. In short, I expected to be the most unhappy woman in the world: and thinking it needless to be on the reserve, in such a cruel state of expectation, I said to my duenna, with a resolute air, (as foon as I found myself alone with her) "You are "doubtless preparing a great many sufferings . "for me; but I think proper to advertise " you beforehand, that I have not a great " deal of patience; and that I will endeavour " to give you as many mortifications as I " can: In the mean time, I declare that my " heart entertains a passion which all your re-" monstrances shall not impair; so you may "take your measures accordingly, and re-"double your vigilance; for I confess I will " spare nothing to deceive it." At these words, the grim-faced duenna, (who I imagined, was about to give me a fample of her office) cleared up her austere countenance, and faid with a smiling air, " I am charmed with your humour, your frankness encourages mine, and I see we are designed for one another: Ah, my fair Mergellina! how little are you acquainted with me when you judge by the character your spouse the doctor gives me, and by this four aspect I assume! I am so far from being an enemy to pleafure, that my fole motive

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tive for hiring myself as the minister of jealous husbands, is, that I may the more effectually serve their handsome wives. I have long possessed the great mystery of disguising myself; and I may call myself doubly happy, because I enjoy the convenience of sin and the reputation of virtue at the same time. Between you and me, this is the scope of mankind in general: virtue itself is too dissicult to be acquired; and therefore people are fatisfied with possessing the appearance of it."

Leave your conduct to my direction, (added the governante) and I warrant you, we will foon impose upon old doctor Oloroso, who, by my troth, shall soon share the fate of Signior Apuntador; for I don't fee why the forehead of a physician should be more respected than that of an apothecary. Poor Apuntador! how many tricks his wife and I have played him! She was a lovely creature! a good-humoured foul, heaven rest it! I can affure you, she made a good use of her youth; and did not want abundance of admirers, whom I introduced to the house without ever being discovered by her husband: look upon me therefore, madam, with a more favourable eye, and be perfuaded, that whatever talent the old fquire might have for your fervice, you will lose nothing by the change, and perhaps find me still more useful than he was.

I leave you to judge, Diego, (continued Mergellina, how much I thought myself oblig-

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ed to the duenna, for this frank declaration: for I looked upon her as a person of the most austere virtue; so apt are people to be deceived in women. Her fincerity gained my heart in a moment; I embraced her in a transport of joy, that convinced her how much I was charm'd with my lot, in having her for a governante; and afterwards freely imparted my fentiments to her, and begg'd that she would, without loss of time, contrive a private meeting with you, which she has not failed to procure. This very morning she set at work that old woman who fpoke to you, and who is an agent whom she often employed for the apothecary's wife. But the most pleasant part of this adventure (added she, laughing) is that Melancia, understanding from me that my husband commonly sleeps found, has gone to bed to him, and this very minute supplies my place. "So much the worfe, madam, (faid) "I to Mergellina) I cannot approve of this "invention: your husband may wake and " perceive the cheat." - " He cannot perceive " it (answered she, with some precipitation;) "don't be uneasy on that score; nor let a " groundless panic poison the delight you "ought to enjoy with a young lady who has " a regard for you."

The old doctor's wife, observing that I was still dismay'd, notwithstanding her assurance, did every thing in her power to encourage me, and practised so many different endeavours for that purpose, that she succeeded at last, and I

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resolved to profit by the occasion; but just as Cupid, attended by the sports and smiles, was about to crown my happiness, we were aftonished by a loud rap at the street door. Immediately love and his train took wing, like a flock of fearful birds, disperfed by fudden noise! - Mergellina concealed me in a hurry under a table that was in the hall; then blowing out the lamp, as it had been agreed upon between her governante and her, in case such a cross accident should happen, she went to the chamber where her hufband was a-bed. In the mean time the whole house rung with the repeated knocks that were thundered at the door; and the doctor, starting out of his fleep, called Melancia.-The duenna, jumping out of bed, (altho' the doctor, who miftook her for his wife, bid her lie ftill) joined her miftress in the dark, who, feeling her, called Melancia also, and bid her go and see who knocked at the door: "Madam, (an-" fwered the governante) I am here.—Go to " bed again, if you please, and I will go and " fee what is the matter." Mean while Mergellina, having undress'd, slipt into bed to the doctor, who had not the least suspicion of the trick ..- 'Tis true, indeed, this scene was perform'd in the dark by two actresses, one of whom was matchless in her way, and the other an admirable proficient.

The duenna, wrapt in a robe de chambre, appearing foon after with a candle in her hand, faid to her mafter, "Signior doctor, be fo

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"good as to rife: the bookfeller, Fernandez " de Buendia, our neighbour, has fallen into "an apoplexy, and you are defired to go " with all hafte to his affiftance." The phyfician dress'd himself as soon as he could, and went away; while his wife, in a loofe gown, came along with the duenna into the hall where I was, and drawing me from under the table, more dead than alive, "You have no-"thing to fear, Diego, (faid she) recollect " yourself.". Then, in a few words, she told me what had happened, and wanted to renew the conversation which had been interrupted; but this the governante opposed, saying, "Ma-"dam, perhaps your busband will find the "bookseller dead, and return immediately. " Befides, (added the, perceiving me benumb'd "with fear) what would you do with this " poor lad? He is in no condition to main-" tain the conference, which you had better " defer till to-morrow." - Donna Mergellina confented to this proposal, not without regret; so well did she love the present time: and I believe the was very much mortified, that the could not then bestow upon the doctor the new cap she had destined for him.

As for my own part, less forry for having been baulk'd of love's most precious favours, than glad to be out of danger, I went back to my master's house, where I spent the night in reflecting upon my adventure.—I hesitated some time about going to theplace of rendezvous next night, having as bad an opinion of K 2

this fecond enterprize as of the first; but the devil, who is always laying close fiege to us, or rather, on fuch occasions, takes possession of our faculties, fuggested that I should be a great booby to ftop short in the middle of such a delightful journey; represented to my fancy Mergellina adorned with new charms, and heighten'd the value of the pleasures that awaited me: so that I resolved to pursue my point, and flattering myself with the hope of behaving with more courage than before, I repaired in this disposition to the doctor's door, between eleven and twelve next night, which was fo dark that not one star appeared in the firmament. I mew'd two or three times, to give notice that I was in the street; and nobody coming to the door, I not only repeated the fignal, but also mimicked all the different expressions of a cat, which a shepherd of Olmedo had taught me; and acquitted myfelf fo well, that a neighbour going home, and miftaking me for one of those animals whose notes I imitated, took up a flint-stone he found at his feet, and threw it at me with his whole ftrength, faying, "Curse on the caterwaller!" I received the blow upon my head, which stunn'd me so much that I had well nigh tumbled backwards. I felt myself wounded: a circumstance sufficient to give me a disgust at gallantry; and, losing my love with my blood, returned to our house, where I alarmed and raised the whole family. My master examined and dreffed my wound, which he

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thought dangerous; but it was attended with no bad consequence, and in three weeks disappeared. — During all that time I heard not one syllable about Mergellina; and it is not unlikely that Dame Melancia, in order to detach her from me, introduced her to some better acquaintance. But this gave me no concern; for as soon as I found myself perfectly cured I left Madrid, in order to perform my tour of Spain.

CHAP. VIII.

Gil Blas and his companion come up with a man whom they perceive soaking crusts of bread in a spring; and enter into conversation with him.

Olgnier Diego de la Fuenta recounted a good many more adventures that had happened to him; but, in my opinion, so little worth the breath they cost, that I shall pass them over in filence; tho' I was obliged to hear the recital, which was so tedious, that it brought us as far as Ponte de Duera. In this village we staid the remaining part of the day; and, at the inn where we lodged, ordered for supper a dish of cabbage-soup and a roasted hare, the fpecies of which we were at great pains to prove beforehand. On the morrow, at break of day, we purfued our journey, after having replenish'd our bottle with pretty good wine, and furnish'd our knapsack with some slices of bread, and the half of the hare which remained from our supper.

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When we had gone about two leagues, we began to be hungry, and perceiving several large trees, which formed an agreeable shade in the fields, about two hundred paces from the highway, we went thither to make a halt, and found a man, feven or eight and twenty years old, foaking fome crusts in a fountain. A long fword lay by him on the grafs, with an havrefack, of which he had unloaded his shoulders; and, though he was poorly cloathed, he discovered a good shape and mein.-We accosted him in a civil manner, upon which he faluted us with great complaifance; and prefenting his crusts, ask'd, with a smile, if we would be of his mels: we answered yes, provided he would give us leave to improve the repast, by joining our breakfast with his. He freely confenting, we immediately produced our victuals, which afforded no unpleafing view to the firanger, who cried in a transport of joy, "How, gentlemen! egad, " there's store of munition for the belly! I " fee you are provident people: for my own " part, I feldom travel fo well provided, but " depend a good deal upon chance. Notwith-" ftanding my present situation, however, I " may fay without vanity, that I fometimes " make a pretty brilliant appearance.-You " must know, that I am usually treated like " a prince, and have guards in my train." "I understand you (said Diego) you would " intimate that you are a player." "You " have hit it (replied the other;) I have acted

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" these fifteen years at least; for I performed " fome fmall parts while I was yet a child." "To be plain with you, (faid the barber, " shaking his head) I can scarce believe what " you fay .- I know what fort of people the " comedians are; these gentlemen don't travel "a-foot, and dine with St. Anthony as you " do: Therefore I cannot help thinking that "you are no more than a candle-fnuffer." "You may think of me as you please (re-" plied the stage-player;) but I affirm, that I " act the very top parts, and among the rest "that of the lover." - " If that be the case, " (faid my comrade) I congratulate you upon "it; and am very proud, that Signior Gil "Blas and I have the honour to breakfast

" with a person of fuch importance."

We then began to gnaw our crusts, and the precious remains of the hare, bestowing such rude embraces on the bottle, that it was empty in a very short time; and being so busy with what we were about, that we scarce spoke one word during the repast; which being ended, the conversation was thus refumed: "I am "furprized (faid the barber to the player) to " fee you in such indifferent circumstances: " for a stage hero, methinks you have a very "needy appearance: you'll pardon my free-"dom." "Your freedom! (cried the actor) " ah! truly you are little acquainted with "Melchior Zapata. Thank heaven, I am " not at all exceptious: you do me a pleasure " in speaking so frankly; for I myself love to K 4 " tell

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"tell my mind without reserve.—I sincerely own I am not rich. — Look, (added he, " shewing that his doublet was lined with " play bills) this is the stuff that usually " ferves me for lining; and if you have any "curiofity to fee my wardrobe, it shall be "forthwith gratified." At the same time he took out of his knapfack an old fuit laced with tinsel, a forry hat with some old plume of feathers, a pair of filk flockings full of holes, and red buskins very much worn. "You see " (faid he) I am tolerably poor." - " That's " what furprises me (replied Diego.) So you " have neither wife nor daughter?" " I have " a wife, young and handsome (said Zapata;) " yet I am never a bit the better for it, fo " wonderfully capricious is my fate. I mar-" ried a beautiful actress, in hopes that she "would not let me starve; and, unfortunate-" ly for me, she is incorruptibly chaste. Who " the devil would not have been deceived as I " was? there happened to be one virtuous wo-"man among the strolers, and she must fall to my lot!" "Truly you have had bad " luck (faid the barber:) but why did not " you marry an actress of the king's company " at Madrid, in which case you could not "have been disappointed?" " I grant it " (replied the player;) but a plague upon it, " a little country-stroler dares not aspire to "those famous heroines: that is as much as " an actor of the prince's company can do; " fome of whom are even obliged to match « in

"in the city.—Luckily for them, the city is well stored, and they often light on yokefellows not a whit inferior to those princesses who were brought up behind the scenes."

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"Have you never endeavoured (faid my " companion to him) to be introduced into " that company? Must one have infinite me-" rit to be admitted into it?"-" Good! (re-" plied Melchior) you are merry with your infinite merit. — It is composed of twenty "actors: ask their characters in town, and " you will hear them finely handled. More " than one half deserve to carry the knapsack " still; but for all that, it is no easy matter to " be received among them. One must have " money, or powerful friends, to supply the " want of talent. - This I ought to know, " fince I am just come from making a trial at Madrid, where I have been hooted and his'd " in a hellish manner, although I deserved to " be applauded to the skies; for I roar'd, rant-" ed, burlesqued nature an hundred times; " and moreover, in my declamation, clapp'd. " my clench'd fift to my princess's nose. -In " a word, I performed in the taste of the great " actors in vogue; and yet the same audience " that relish'd this behaviour in them, could " not endure it in me. - You see the force of " prejudice! wherefore finding myself incapa-" ble of pleasing on that stage, and having " nothing to fecure my reception in defiance " of the town, I am going back to Zamora, " where I shall rejoin my wife and comrades,

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" who are not in the most flourishing circum-

" ftances. God grant that we may not be

" obliged to beg our way to the next town; a

" misfortune which has already happened to

" us more than once."

With these words this prince of the drama fprung up, shoulder'd his knapsack, girded on his fword, and, at parting, pronounced with a theatrical air, "Gentlemen, adieu! may the "Gods exhaust their bounties on you." "And " you, (replied Diego:) may you, at your re-"turn to Zamora, behold your wife's condi-"tion and temper changed." Signior Zapata no fooner shew'd his heels than he began to rehearfe as he walk'd, and immediately the barber and I his'd, to put him in mind of his trial: the noise reaching his ears, he thought he still heard the cat-calls of Madrid; upon which he look'd back, and perceiving that we made merry at his expence, far from being incenfed at our buffoonry, took all in good part, and continued his noise, bursting into fits of laughter all the way. We returned his mirth with all our might; and getting back into the high road, purfued our journey.

CHAP. IX.

The condition in which Diego finds his family; and an account of the rejoicings: after which Gil Blas bids bim farewel.

TAving slept that night between Moyados and Valpuelta, in a little village whose name I have forgot, we arrived next day, about





about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in the plain of Olmedo. "Signior Gil Blas, (faid " my comrade) there is the place of my nati-" vity, which I cannot behold again without "transport; so natural it is to love one's " Signior Diego, (answered I) " country." " one who expresses such regard for his native "country, might, I think, have spoke of it " a little more advantageously than you have "done: Olmedo feems to be a city, and you " told me it was only a village. It ought, at " least, to be dignified with the epithet of "market-town." - " I beg its pardon (replied "the barber;) but I must own, that after, " having feen Madrid, Toledo, Saragofa, and " all the great cities I touched at in making " my tour of Spain, I look upon the small " ones as villages." As we advanced into the plain, we thought we observed a great concourse of people near Olmedo; and when we were near enough to discern objects, we found fomething to attract our attention.

There were three tents pitched at a small distance from one another, and hard-by a great number of cooks and scullions preparing a feast: some laid the cloth on long tables, placed under the tents; some silled earthen pitchers with wine; others made the pots boil, and others again turned spits that were loaded with all forts of meat: but what I considered more attentively than all the rest, was a great stage, raised and adorned with decorations of painted paper of different colours, and garnish'd

nish'd with Greek and Latin devices. barber no fooner perceived the infcriptions than he faid, "All these Greek mottos favour "ftrongly of my uncle Thomas, who, I'll " hold a wager, has a hand in the business: " for, between you and me, he is a learned " man, and has a power of college-books by " heart: his greatest fault is, that he incessant-" ly quotes passages from them in conversa-" tion, which is not agreeable to every body. " Besides, (added he) my uncle has translated " a good many Greek and Latin authors, and " is quite mafter of the ancients, as one may " fee by the learned remarks which he has " made: had it not been for him, we should " never have known, that in the city of " Athens children cried when they were flog-" ged: we owe that discovery to his profound " erudition."

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After my comrade and I had observed all those things which I have mentioned, we were curious to know the cause of such preparations, and went forward to enquire, when Diego recognized in the director of the feast, Signior Thomas de la Fuenta, whom he accosted with great eagerness. The school-master did not, at first, know the young barber; so much was he altered during an absence of ten years: but recollecting him at last, he embraced him affectionately, saying, "What!" do I see thee then, Diego, my dear ne"phew? Do I see thee returned to the town where thou first saw'st the light? Thou art

come to revisit thy houshold-gods; and "heaven restores thee safe and sound to thy "kindred! O day, thrice and four times hap-"py! O day, worthy to be mark'd with a "white stone! A world of changes have hap. " pen'd, my friend, (purfued he:) thy uncle " Pedro, the poet, has fallen a victim to Plu-" to, having died three months ago. That " miser, while alive, was afraid of wanting "the necessaries of life. Argenti pallebar " amore. For tho' he received large pen-" sions from several grandees, he did not " fpend ten pistoles a year for his subsistence; " and was even ferved by a valet whom he "did not maintain. That fool, more fense-"less than the Grecian Aristippus, who or-" dered his flaves to throw away, in the de-" farts of Afric, the riches they carried, as a "burthen that incommoded them in their "march; -he, I fay, heap'd up all the gold " and filver he could scrape together; and for " whom? for those very heirs he would not " fo much as fee. He died worth thirty " thousand ducats, which thy father, thy un-" cle Bertrand, and I, have equally shared " among us; fo that we are able to fettle our " children to our heart's desire. My brother "Nicolas has already disposed of thy fifter "Therefa, whom he has given in marriage to "the fon of one of our alcaldes. Connubio " junxit stabili, propriumque dicavit. These " nuptials, performed under the most happy " auspices, we have celebrated these two days " with

with fuch preparation; three tents being " pitch'd in the plain, one for each of the "three heirs of Pedro, who, in their turns, " bear the expence of the day. I wish thou "hadft arrived fooner, to have feen the be-" ginning of our rejoicings. The day before " yesterday, when they were married, thy fa-" ther gave a sumptuous entertainment, which " was followed by a course at the ring: thy " uncle, the mercer, treated yesterday, and re-" galed us with a pastoral feast; ten of the " genteelest youths, and as many handsome " maidens, were dress'd like shepherds, all "the ribbons and points in his shop being " employed to adorn them. - This gay com-" pany performed feveral dances, and fung a " thousand light and tender catches: never-" thelefs, though nothing was ever more gal-" lant, the spectators did not seem to relish " it, which shews that pastoral is quite out of " date."

"To-day (added he) every thing is to be at my coft, and I will exhibit to the inhabitants of Olmedo a shew of my own invention. Finis coronabit opus. I have ordered a theatre to be raised, on which (God willing) I will make my scholars represent a piece of my own composing, intitled, The Diversions of Muley Bugentus, King of Morocco. It will be extremely well acted, because I have scholars who declaim like the players of Madrid: they are the fons of fashionable people living at Penna-

" fiel and Segovia, who are boarded with me, " and are become excellent actors under my " instruction. Their performance will appear "to be of a masterly stamp, ut it dicam. "With regard to the piece, I shall fay no-"thing, that thou may'st enjoy the pleafure " of furprize; but only observe that it must "transport the spectators: for it is one of " those tragic subjects which wake the foul " by the images of death they present to the "view. -I am of Aristotle's opinion, that " the chief end of tragedy is to raise terror. " Oh! if I had attach'd myself to the drama, "I would have introduced none but bloody-" minded princes and heroick affaffins on the " scene, and would have bathed myself in " gore: and in my tragedies, not only the " principal persons, but even their guards " should have perish'd .--- I would have mur-" dered them all, to the very prompter. " a word, my tafte is horror; and we fee that " fuch poems captivate the multitude, fup-" port the luxury of the players, and enable " the author to live at his eafe."

Just as he had done speaking, we saw coming out of the village into the plain a great concourse of men and women. These were no other than the new-married couple, accompanied by their relations and friends, and preceded by ten or twelve musicians, who, playing all together, performed a most thundering concert. We went up to meet them, and Diego made himself known; upon which

the whole affembly broke out into shouts of joy, and every one was eager to embrace him; fo that he was fufficiently employ'd in receiving their expressions of friendship. His whole family, as well as all who were present, having well nigh fmother'd him with careffes, his father, faid to him, "Welcome, Diego; thou "findest thy parents somewhat better'd in "their circumstances, my child. I shall say " no more at present, but explain myself more " particularly bye and bye." Mean while the company, advancing into the plain, repaired to the tents, and fat down at the tables that were covered; and I and my companion, whom I would not quit, dined with the bridegroom and bride, who feemed to be very well match-The repast was pretty long, because the school-master had the vanity to furnish three courses, in order to excel his brothers, who had not treated with fuch magnificence.

After the banquet, all the guests express'd impatience to see the representation of Signior Thomas's piece, not doubting (as they said) that the production of such a fine genius would answer their most sanguine expectation. Accordingly approaching the stage, before which the musicians had already taken their seats, in order to play between the acts, every body, in the most profound silence, waited for the beginning. The actors appeared on the scene, and the author with his poem in his hand, sat down on one side, to prompt them. It was not without reason that he told

us the piece was tragical; for, in the first act, the king of Morocco, by way of recreation, shot an hundred moorish slaves with arrows: in the fecond, he beheaded thirty Portuguefe officers, whom one of his captains had made prisoners of war: and in the third and last, this monarch, mad with his wives, fets fire with his own hand to a detach'd palace, in which they were shut up, and reduces them and it to ashes. The Moorish Slaves, as well as the Portuguese officers, were figures of ozier, very artfully made; and the palace, composed of paper, seemed all in a slame by an artificial firework. This conflagration, accompanied with a thousand doleful shrieks, that seemed to issue from the midst of the flames, concluded the piece, and closed the scene in a very diverting manner. The whole plain ecchoed with the applause that was given to fuch a fine tragedy, which justified the good taste of the poet, and shewed that he knew how to chuse his subject.

I thought there was no more to be seen, after the diversions of Muley Bugentuf; but I was mistaken: for we were advertised of a new shew by the sound of drums and trumpets. This was a distribution of prizes: Thomas de la Fuenta, to make the feast more solemn, having ordered all his scholars (as well those who were boarded with him as the rest) to compose, and intending to bestow on those who had succeeded best, books bought at Segovia with his own coin. Immediately

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therefore, two school-forms were brought upon the stage, with a press full of little books handsomely bound: then all the actors returned upon the scene, and ranged themselves round Signior Thomas, who look'd as big as the head mafter of a college, and held a paper in his hand, on which were written the names of those who were to obtain the prizes: this he gave to the king of Morocco, who began to read it with a loud Voice; and every scholar who was called, going in a respectful manner, receiving a book from the pedant, who was afterwards crowned with bays, and ordered to fit down on one of the benches, that he might be exposed to the admiration of the crowd. Nevertheless, how desirous soever the school-master was of fending home the fpectators fatisfied, he could by no means effect it; because having distributed almost all the prizes among his boarders, as the custom is, the mothers of some of the rest, being prefent, were offended; and openly accused the pedant of partiality, in fuch a manner, that this entertainment, which had hitherto been fo glorious for him, had like to have ended in mischief, like the feast of the Lapithæ.

The End of the SECOND BOOK.

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ADVENTURES

OF

GIL BLAS of Santillane.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

The arrival of Gil Blas at Madrid; with an account of the first master whom he served in that city.

AVING staid some time with the young barber, I afterwards joined a merchant of Segovia, in his way thro' Olmedo, with sour mules, on which he had transported goods to Valladolid, and was returning with them unloaded. We became acquainted on the road, and he conceived such a friendship for me, that he insisted upon my lodging at his house when we arrived at Segovia. There he detain'd me two days; and when

when I was ready to fet out for Madrid, along with a carrier, he intrufted me with a letter, which he defired I would in person deliver, according to the direction, without telling me that it was a recommendation. I did not fail to present it to Signior Mattheo Melendez, a woollen-draper, who lived near the Sun-gate, at the corner of the Trunkmaker's-street; and he no fooner opened it, and read the contents, then he faid, with a complaifant air, " Sig-" nior Gil Blas, Pedro Palacio, my corre-" fpondent, writes fo preffingly in your be-" half, that I cannot dispense with your lodg-" ing at my house. He moreover intreats me " to find a place for you; and I undertake " the office with pleasure, being persuaded " that I shall find no difficulty in procuring

" for you a good fettlement."

I accepted the offer of Melendez with fo much the more joy, as my finances were fenfibly diminished: but I did not live long at his expence; for in eight days he gave me to know, that he had recommended me to a gentleman of his acquaintance, who wanted a valet de chambre; and that, in all probability, I would be preferred to the post. The gentleman coming in at that moment, "Signior, " (said Melendez, shewing me to him) this " is the young man I mentioned to you. He " is a youth of honour and fobriety, and I " can answer for his good behaviour, as much " as for my own." The cavalier having look'd at me attentively, faid he liked my councountenance, and took me into his service. "He may follow me now, (added he) and I "will instruct him in his duty." At these words he bad the merchant good-morrow, and conducting me into the great street just by St. Philip's Church, we entered a pretty good house, one wing of which he posses'd; and going up five or six steps of a stair, he introduced me into a chamber, secured by two strong doors, which he opened, and in the first I perceived a small window, grated with iron: thro' this chamber we went into another, where there was a bed and other furniture, more calculated for convenience than shew.

If my new master considered me attentively at the house of Melendez, I examined him with great earnestness, in my turn. He was a man turned of fifty, seemed to be serious and referved, tho' good-natured withal; fo that I conceived no bad opinion of him. He put feveral questions to me about my family, and being fatisfied with my answers, "Gil Blas, " (faid he) I believe thou art a fensible young " fellow, and I am very glad to have such an " one in my service. As for thee, thou shalt " have no cause to complain: I will give thee " fix rials a day for victuals, clothes, wages " and all, exclusive of some little perquisites "thou may'ft enjoy, and I am eafily ferved; " for I keep no table, but always dine abroad. " ---- All that thou hast to do in a morning is " to clean my clothes, and thou shalt be at " thy

"take care only to come back early in the evening, and wait for me at the door. This is all I exact." After having thus preferibed my duty, he took out his purse and gave me fix rials, as a beginning to fulfil articles; then going out, he lock'd the doors himself, and putting the keys in his pocket, "Friend, (said he) don't follow me: go where you please; but be sure to be on the stair when I return in the evening." So saying, he left me to dispose of myself as I should think proper.

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" In good faith, Gil Blas, (faid I to my-" felf) thou couldst not have found a better " mafter: what! to light on a man, who, " for brushing his clothes, and helping him "to dress of a morning, gives me fix rials " per day, with liberty to walk and take my "diversion, like a scholar during the va-" cation! Egad, this is the happiest of all " fituations! No wonder that I was fo de-" firous of being at Madrid: I had certainly " fome supernatural intimation of the happior ness that awaited me." I spent the day in stroling about the streets, diverting myself with looking at every thing that was new to me, and this gave me sufficient employment. In the evening, after having supp'd at an eating-house not far from our lodgings, I betook myfelf to the place whither my mafter had ordered me to repair, and where he himself arrived three quarters of an hour after me, feemingly

feemingly well pleafed with my punctuality. "Very well, (faid he) this is right: I love " to fee fervants attentive to their duty." So faying he open'd the doors of his apartment, and fhut them again as foon as we had got in: being in the dark, he took a tinder-box and struck a light, by the help of which I affisted to undress him. When he was a-bed, I lighted, by his order, a lamp that flood in his chimney, and carried the candle into the antichamber, where I went to sleep in a bed without curtains. --- Next morning he got up between nine and ten o'clock, and, when I had dusted his clothes, counted me fix more rials, and dismiss'd me till the evening: after which he went out also, not without locking his doors with great care; fo we parted again for the remaining part of the day.

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Such was our manner of living, which I found very agreeable; and the best joke of all was, I did not know my master's name: Melendez himself was ignorant of it, being only acquainted with him as a gentleman who came sometimes to his shop, and bought cloth of him as he had occasion for it. Our neighbours could give me no better information; all of them assuring me, that my master was utterly unknown to them, altho' he had lived two years in the ward. They told me, that he visited nobody in the neighbourhood; and some of them, accustomed to make rash inferences, concluded from thence, that he was no better than he should be. They went still

farther,

farther, suspected him to be a spy of the king of Portugal, and charitably advertised me of the suspection, that I might take my measures accordingly. I was disturbed at this advice; and reslected, that if the thing was so, I should run the risk of visiting the prison of Madrid. I could not conside in my innocence, my past missortunes having taught me to dread justice; for I had found by experience, that if she does not put the innocent to death, she at least treats them with so little hospitality, that her lodgers are always in a very melancholy situation.

In fuch a delicate conjuncture I confulted Melendez, who did not know how to advise me; for if he could not believe that my mafter was a fpy, on the other hand, he had no certain reason to think otherwise: so that I resolved to observe my patron narrowly, and to leave him, if I should perceive that he was undoubtedly an enemy to the state; but I thought prudence, and the easiness of my place, required that I should be first perfectly fure of his practices. With this view I began to keep a strict eye over his actions; and in order to found him, "Sir, (faid I, one even-"ing, while I undress'd him) one does not "know how to live, so as to avoid slander: " the world is very malicious, and we, among " others, are very little obliged to our neigh-"bours. You cannot guess in what manner the " malicious creatures talk of us." ---- " Right, "Gil Blas, (answered he): but what can they " fay of us, child? " Ah! truly (I replied) " scandal never wants matter. Virtue herself " furnishes food for it. Our neighbours fay " that we are dangerous people, and deferve " to be taken notice of by the government. " In a word, you are thought to be a fpy for " the king of Portugal." While I pronounced these words, I look'd hard at my master, as Alexander * eyed his physician; and employing all my penetration to discover what effect my report produced in him, thought I obferved an emotion that too well agreed with the conjectures of the neighbourhood, and he fell into a fit of musing, upon which I did not put the most favourable construction: but he foon recovered himself, and said with an air of tranquility, "Gil Blas, let our neigh-" bours think as they please, without making " our peace depend on their imaginations;

" and fince we give them no cause to think " amis of us, let their opinion give us no

" uneasiness."

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Upon this he went to bed, and I followed his example, without knowing what to think of the matter. Next day, just as we were going out in the morning, we heard a loud rap at the outward door, my master opened the other, and looking thro' the small grate,

^{*} Alexander the great having received a letter, intimating that his physician intended to poison him, took the cup of medicine which he prescribed, and swallowing it without hestation, put the letter into the suspected person's hand, fixing his eyes stedfastly upon him, while he read it, in order to distinguish in his countenance, the signs of innocence or guilt.

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faw a decent fort of a man at it, who faid, " Signior cavalier, I am an alguazil, and " come hither to tell you, that the corregider " would speak with you." " What does he " want with me?" (replied my patron) " That " I am ignorant of, Signior, (faid the algua-" zil;) but if you will take the trouble to " go to his house, you will soon know." "I " am his most humble servant, (resumed my mafter;) but have no manner of business " with him." So faying, he shut the second door; and having walked up and down for fome time, like one alarmed at the discourse of the alguazil, put fix rials into my hand, " faying, "Gil Blas, thou may'ft go out, my " friend. I do not intend to go abroad fo " early, and have no further occasion for thee " this morning." These words made me believe, that the fear of being apprehended obliged him to stay at home; so that when I left him, in order to fee if my fuspicions were unjust, I hid myself in a place from whence I could fee him, if he should come out; and should have had the patience to stay there the whole morning, had he not spared me that trouble. But an hour after, I faw him walking in the street with an air of assurance, that at first confounded my penetration; but, far from being duped by those appearances, I distrusted them, having no favourable opinion of the man. I look'd upon his composure as a piece of affectation, and even imagined that his remaining at home was

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with a view of fecuring his gold and jewels; and that, in all probability, he would confult his fafety by immediate flight. I did not expect to fee him again, and hefitated about going in the evening to give my attendance at the door; fo fure I was that he would quit the city inftantly, to escape from the danger that threaten'd him. I did not fail, however, of being there; and, to my utter surprize, my master returned at his usual time, went to bed without shewing the least uneasiness, and got up next day with the same tranquility.

When we had done dreffing, somebody knocked at the door; upon which, my master looking thro' the grate, perceived the same alguazil who had been there the preceding day, and asked what he wanted. "Open, "(answered the alguazil) here is monsieur the "corregidor *." At this formidable name, my blood froze in my veins; for I was cursedly asraid of these gentlemen since I had passed through their hands; and wished that moment to be an hundred leagues from Madrid; but my patron less asraid than I, opened the door, and received the judge with great respect. "You see, (said the corregidor to him) I do

"You fee, (faid the corregidor to him) I do not come to your lodgings with many at-

" tendants, being desirous of doing every thing with as little noise as possible: and I

" believe that you deserve this respect, not" withstanding the ugly reports that are spread

The corregidor is the chief civil magistrate in every city of spain, appointed by the king.

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" of you. Tell me, therefore, your name, " and business at Madrid?" Signior, (replied my mafter) " I was born in New Ca-" stile, and my name is Don Bernard de Ca-" stel Blazo: with regard to my business, I " divert myself in walking, frequenting shews, " and enjoying the agreeable conversation of " a few felect friends." Doubtless, (said the " judge) you have a great income." " No, " Sir, (refumed my patron, interrupting him) "I have neither, rents, lands nor house." " How do you live then? (replied the corre-" gidor.") " On that which you-shall see, " (faid Don Barnard;") - at the same time, he lifted up a hanging, opened a door which I had not before observed, then another behind that, and carried the judge into a closet, where he shewed him a great trunk filled with pieces of gold.

Then he went on; "Signior, you know that the Spaniards are enemies to work: nevertheless, how averse soever they may be to trouble, I may safely say that I excel them all in that particular: having a fund of latiness that renders me incapable of any manner of employment. If I had a mind to dignify my vices, I would call this laziness a philosophical indolence, the work of a mind weaned from every thing that is most ardently pursued in life. But I will frankly own that I am constitutionally idle: and so idle, that if I was under a necessity of working for my livelihood, I believe I should

22-I " should let myself die of hunger. With a ne, re-" view therefore, to lead a life agreeable to " my humour, to free myself from the trou-"ble of managing my estate, and above all " things to fave myself the plague of a stew-VS. " ard; I have converted my whole patrimoof " ny, confifting of feveral confiderable inheri-" tances, into ready money. In this trunk " are fifty thousand ducats; more than I shall " ever have occasion for, was I to live ano-" ther age; for I don't spend a thousand a re-" year, and am already turned of fifty. I " am not at all afraid of what is to happen; " for thank heaven, I am not addicted to any " one of the three things which commonly " bring men to ruin: I am not a flave to my " ftomach, I play only for amusement, and re " am quite cured of women. So, that I am " under no apprehension of being ranked in " my old age, among those voluptuous do-W " tards who purchase the favours of courte-" zans at an extravagant price." "What a happy man you are! (laid the " corregidor) you are very unjustly suspected " of being a spy; that office being very unfit " for a person of your character. Proceed, " Don Barnard, (added he) continue the life i-" you now lead; and far from disturbing your " happiness, I declare myself the guardian of " it; I beg the favour of your friendship, and " offer you mine in return." Ah Signior! " (cried my master, penetrated with these ty " obliging expressions,) I accept the preciee ous L 3

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"offer you make, with equal joy and respect:
"for in vouchsafing me your friendship, you
"increase my wealth and crown my felicity."
After this conversation, which the alguazil and I overheard at the closet-door, the corregidor took his leave of Don Barnard, who could not enough express his gratitude; while I, to second my master, and assist him in doing the honours of the house, overwhelmed the alguazil with civilities, making a thousand profound bows, though in the bottom of my soul, I harboured that disdain and aversion which every man of honour has for one of his occupation.

CHAP. II.

The astonishment of Gil Blas, when he met Captain Rolando at Madrid, and the curious things which that robber recounted to him.

ON Bernard de Castel Blazo, after having waited upon the corregidor to the street, returned with all expedition, to lock his strong box and all the doors that secured it. Then we went out both very well satisfied: he for having acquired a powerful friend, and I for being now ensured in my six rials a day. The desire I had to recount this adventure to Melendez, made me take the road to his house, which when I had almost reached, I perceived captain Rolando! I was confounded at finding him in this place, and could not help shivering at sight of him! He knew me at once,

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once, accosted me very gravely, and preserving still his air of superiority, ordered me to follow him. I obeyed with fear and trembling, faying to myself, "Alas! he will, doubtless, make me pay what I owe him. Whither will he lead me? perhaps to some subterranean abode in this city. A plague upon it! If I thought fo, I would let him fee in a hurry, that I have not got the gout in my toes." As I walked behind him, I resolved to take particular notice of the place where he should stop, from which I proposed to scamper off as fast as my legs could carry me, should it feem in the least suspicious.

But Rolando foon banished my fear, by going into a noted tavern, whither I followed him; and where he called for the best wine, and bespoke dinner; in the mean time, we went into a room by ourselves, where the captain spoke in this manner: " Thou must " be furprised, Gil Blas, to meet thy old " commander in this place; and wilt be more " fo still when thou shalt hear what I am going "to relate: That day on which I left thee " in our fubterranean retreat, and fet out for " Mansilla with my whole company, in order " to dispose of the mules and horses which " we had taken the preceding day, it was our " fortune to meet the son of the corregidor of " Leon in his coach, accompanied by four " men on horseback well armed. We made " two of them bite the dust, and the others

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" betake themselves to slight; while the coach-

" man, afraid of his mafter's life, cried, in a " fuppliant voice, O dear gentlemen! in the " name of God, do not kill the only fon of " the corregidor of Leon. My people did " not at all relent at these words, which on "the contrary, inspired them with fury: "Gentlemen, (faid one among us) let not " the fon of our mortal enemy escape: how. " many people of our profession hath his fa-" ther put to death? let us avenge them now, " and facrifice this victim to their manes. " The rest of my men approved of this pro-" pofal; and even my lieutenant prepared to " act the high-priest in this ceremony, when " I held his hands; faying, stop, at your pe-" ril! Why should we shed blood unnecessa-" rily? Let us be fatisfied with the purse of " this young man, whom (fince he makes no " refiftance) it would be the utmost barbarity " to kill: befides, he is not accountable for " the actions of his father, who does no more " than his duty, in condemning us to death; " just as we do ours, in risling travellers on

"the highway.
"My intercession was far from being unferviceable to the corregidor's son, from
whom we took nothing but his money; and
having carried off the horses of the two
men we had slain, we sold them together
with our own, at Mansilla; then returning
to our cavern, which we reached next day
before it was light, we were not a little
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" and our furprise redoubled when we saw " Leonardo fettered in the kitchen. " briefly informed by her of what had hap-" pened, we wondered how thou could'ft out-" wit us, never having thought thee capable " of playing fuch a clever trick, and we for-" gave thee on account of the invention. " Having untied our cook-maid, and given " orders to dress victuals for us, we went to " look after our horses in the stable, where " the old negro, who had received no fufte-" stance for four and twenty hours, was at the " last gasp. We would have given him all " the affistance in our power; but he had lost " his fenses, and was otherwise so low, that " notwithstanding our good-will, we left the " poor devil in the clutches of death. " did not deprive us of our appetite, which " having fatisfied with a fumptuous meal, we " retired to our feveral chambers, and flept " the rest of the day: when we got up, Leo-" narda let us know that Domingo was no " more, upon which we carried him to the " cellar, where thou mayest remember thy " bed was, and there performed his funeral " obsequies, as if he had enjoyed the honour " of being our companion.

"Five or fix days after, it happened, that intending to make an excursion, we one morning, on the skirts of the wood, fell in with three troops belonging to the holy brotherhood, who seemed waiting in order to attack us. As we perceived only one of

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" the three at first, we despised it, tho' more numerous than our company, and attacked it accordingly; but while we were engaged with this, the other two which had found " means to keep themselves hitherto conceal-" ed, rushed upon us, so suddenly, that our " valour was of little or no service, and we " were under a necessity of yielding to the " numbers of the foe. Our lieutenant and " two of our men fell on the field, while the " two that remained and I, were fo hemmed in " and overpowered, that we were taken pri-" foners; and while two of their troops con-" ducted us to Leon, the third went and de-" ftroyed our retreat, which had been disco-" vered as follows: a peafant of Luceno crof-" fing the forest in his return home, perceived " by accident the trap-door of our cavern " lifted up, that very day, on which thou " madeft thy escape with the lady; and suf-" pecting that it was the place of our abode, " had not courage to go in, but contented " himself with taking a good observation of " the place, which the better to mark, he " cut off, with his knife, thin slices of bark " from the trees at small distances as he went " along, until he had got quite out of the " wood; then repairing to Leon, imparted " his discovery to the corregidor, who receiv-" ing it with so much the more joy, as his son " had been robbed by our company, affem-" bled three troops in order to apprehend us, " and the peafant was their guide. 66 My

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" My arrival furnished a shew for all the "inhabitants of Leon: had I been a Portu-"guese general made prisoner of war, the " people could not have been more eager to " fee me." "Behold, (faid they) behold the " famous captain who was the terror of this " country, and who, with his two comrades, " deserves to have his flesh torn from his " bones with red-hot pincers." " Being car-" ried before the corregidor, he began to in-"fult me, faying, "Well, miserable wretch! " heaven, wearied with the disorders of thy " life, at last resigns thee to my justice." "Sir, " (replied I) if my crimes are manifold, at " least, I cannot reproach myself with the " death of your only son, whose life I pre-" ferved, for which you owe me some ac-"knowledgement." "Ah miscreant! (cried " he) people of thy character are not entitled. " to the privileges of honour: and even if I " had a mind to fave thy life, the duty of my " office would not allow me." " Having " fpoke to me in this manner, he ordered us " to be imprisoned in a dungeon, where he " did not let my companions linger long: for "they went out in three days, to act their " last tragical scene in the market-place. As " for me, I remained three whole weeks in " jail, imagining that my punishment was " deferred, in order to make it more terrible; " and was in expectation of a death altoge-"ther new; when the corregidor ordering " me to be brought into his presence, faid, L 6 " Lifler "Listen to thy sentence—Thou art free. Had it not been for thee, my only son would have been murdered on the high-way. As a father, I was willing to acknowledge this piece of service, but not having it in my power to acquit thee as a judge, I have wrote to court in thy behalf, sollicited thy pardon, and obtained it. Thou mayest go then whither thou shalt please. But (added he) take my advice, reslect seriously on thy ill-spent life, and from henceforth quit the

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" profession of robbery."

" I was deeply affected with these words, " and took the road of Madrid, resolved to "turn over a new leaf, and live honeftly in " that city. I found my parents were dead, " and their effects in the hands of an old rela-"tion, who gave me fuch a faithful account " of it, as guardians commonly do; all that I " have been able to touch, being no more "than three thousand ducats, which in all " probability, is not above one fourth of " what is my due. But what course could I " take? I should gain nothing by going to " law: therefore to avoid idleness, I have " purchased the place of an alguazil. My brethren, out of decency would have op-" posed my admission, had they been ac-" quainted with my story, which luckily they " were ignorant of, or pretended to be fo, " which is the same thing; for in that ho-" nourable corps it is the business of every in-" dividual to conceal his own exploits: thank " heaven!

"heaven! not one of us can justly reproach " his fellow: fo that it may be faid of the "fraternity, The devil may take the best. " Nevertheless, my friend, (added Rolando) " I will now disclose the bottom of my soul: is the profession which I have embraced, is " not at all to my liking; it requires a beha-"viour too delicate and mysterious for me; " and whatever tricks we practife, must be " very crafty and fecret. O how I regret my " old profession! I grant, there is more fafety " in this new employment: but there was " more pleasure in the other, and liberty is " my delight. In all likelihood I shall get " rid of my office, and fet out one morning " for the mountains at the fource of the river " Tagus, where I know there is a retreat in-" habited by a numerous company, chiefly " of Catalonians; (that is making their elo-" gium in one word) if thou wilt accompany " me, we will go and encrease the number of "these great men: I shall be second captain " in their company; and will for thy better " reception, affure them that I have feen thee " ten times engaged by my fide; I will extol "thy valour to the skies, and say more in thy " praise than a general says of an officer "whom he wants to promote. I will take care not to mention a word of the trick "thou hast played, because it would make " them fuspicious of thee: the adventure shall " therefore be concealed. Well, (added he) " art

" art thou ready to follow my fortune? I

" wait for thy reply."

"So many men, fo many minds, (faid I to "Rolando) you are born for hardy deeds, and " I for a quiet and easy life." " Oh! I un-" derstand you, (cried he, interrupting me)

" the lady whom love perfuaded you to refcue, "fill keeps possession of your heart, and " doubtless you lead a happy life with her in

" Madrid: confess, Mr. Gil Blas, that you " have taken lodgings for her, and fpend to-

" gether the pistoles which you carried off " from the subterranean retreat." I-told him that he was mistaken, and that in order to undeceive him, I would, while we should be at dinner, relate the story of the lady: this I did accordingly, and informed him of all that had happened to me, fince I quitted the company. Towards the end of our repast, he refumed the subject of the Catalonians, owned that he was determined to join them, and made a new attempt to engage me in the fame resolution: But finding that I was not to be perfuaded, he darted a fierce look at me faying in a very ferious tone, "Since thou

" hast such a groveling soul as to prefer thy

" fervile condition to the honour of affociat-"ing with men of courage, I abandon thee

" to the baseness of thy inclinations: but listen " to the words I am about to pronounce,

" and let them remain engraven on thy me-

" mory: forget that thou hast met me to-day,

" and never talk of me from henceforth: for

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"if ever I shall hear that thou so much as namest me in conversation—thou knowest me—I will say no more." Having thus expressed himself, he called to pay, discharged the bill, and we got up in order to part.

CHAP. III.

He is dismissed by Don Barnard de Castel Blazo, and enters into the service of a beau.

As we went out of the tavern, and were taking leave of one another, my master happening to pass, saw me, and I perceived, looked hard at the captain, which made me believe that he was surprised to find me acquainted with such a sigure. Certain it is, that the appearance of Rolando could not preposses people in his favour: for he was a very tall fellow with a long visage and hook-nose; and though not ugly, had very much the air of a rank sharper.

I was not deceived in my conjectures; for in the evening, I found Don Barnard still harping on the captain's figure, and extremely well disposed to believe all the fine things I could have said of him, had not my mouth been shut. "Gil Blas, (said he) who is that "tall spunger in whose company I saw thee "to day?" I replied, "he is an alguazil;" and thought he would rest satisfied with that answer: but he asked a great many other questions; and as I appeared embarassed, because I remembred the threat of Rolando, he broke off

the conversation abruptly, and went to bed. Next morning, when I had done my duty as ufual, instead of fix rials, he gave me as many ducats; faying, "Hold, my Friend, here is " what I give thee for having ferved me hi-" therto: go, and feek for another place, for " I cannot put up with a fervant who has fuch "honourable acquaintances." I took it in my head to pretend in my own justification, that my acquaintance with the alguazil was occafioned by my having prescribed for him, while I practifed physick at Valladolid. " Very well: " (replied my mafter) that's an ingenious eva-" fion: but thou should'st have thought of it " last night, and not have been so much dis-" concerted." " Sir, (added I) I thought it " would be imprudent in me to tell it: and " that was the cause of my confusion." "O! " furely (replied he, clapping my shoulders " gently) you have been very prudent; I did " not think thou hadft been so cunning. Go, " child, I have no farther occasion for thee."

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I went inftantly to inform Melendez of this piece of bad news, who told me for my confolation, that he intended to introduce me into a better family; and accordingly, a few days after, "Gil Blas, my Friend, (said he) you don't know what good news I have to tell you; you are going to enjoy the most agree- able post you could desire; for I will settle you with Don Matthias de Silva, a man of the first quality, and one of those young lords who go under the denomination of beaus:

" beaus: he does me the honour to buy cloth. " of me: on trust, indeed; but there is no-"thing to be loft by people of his rank: for "they commonly marry rich heireffes who " pay their debts: and even if that should " not happen, a tradefman who understands "his business, sells always so dear that he can " afford to lose three fourths of his Bargain. "The steward of Don Matthias is my parti-" cular friend. Let us go to him now; he " will himself present you to his master; and " you may depend upon it, he will, for my " fake, treat you with uncommon regard." In our way to the house of Don Matthias, "the merchant faid, "It will not be amis, I " believe, to give you some information of "the character of this steward, whose name is Gregorio Rodriguez. Between you and " me, he is a man of no family, who finding " himself born for business, followed the bent " of his genius, and enriched himself with " the pillage of two families which he ferved " in quality of steward. I affure you he has " a great deal of vanity, and loves to fee the " rest of the servants cringe to him. They " must address themselves first to him, when "they have the least favour to ask of their " master, for should it happen, that they ob-" tain it without his interest, he has always "expedients in readiness by which it will " either be revoked or rendered ineffectual. " Remember this, Gil Blas, in the regulation " of your conduct: pay your court to Signior " Rodriguez,

"Rodriguez, preferable to your master him-"felf, and do all that lies in your power to "please him: his friendship will bestead you

" please him: his friendship will bestead you much; he will pay your wages punctually;

" and if you are dexterous enough to acquire

"his confidence, he may give you some pret-"ty bone to pick, out of the number he has

"in his possession. Don Matthias is a young

"lord who minds nothing but his pleasure, "and would not for the world inform him-

" felf of the state of his own affairs. What

" a glorious family is that for a fteward!"

Arriving at the house, we defired to speak with Signior Rodriguez, who, we were told, was in his own apartment; there we found him, with a kind off armer, who had a blue canvas bag of money, in his hand. The fleward, who looked more pale and yellow than a girl oppressed with her maidenhead, came towards Melendez with open arms; he, on the other hand, met him in the same manner, and they embraced one another with demonstrations of friendship, in which there was, at least, as much art as nature. Then my affair coming on the carpet, Rodriguez examined me from head to foot, and told me in a very polite manner, that I was just such an one as Don Matthias wanted, and that he would with pleasure present me to that lord. Upon which, Melendez letting him know how much he was interested in my behalf, and begging that he would favour me with his protection, committed me to his care, and after





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After abundance of compliments, withdrew. He was no fooner gone than Rodriguez faid to me, "I will conduct you to my mafter as "foon as I can dispatch this honest country-"man." Then going to the peasant, and taking hold of the beg, "Talego, (said he) "let us see if there be just 500 pistoles here." Having counted the money and found it right, he gave the farmer a discharge for the sum, and sent him about his business; and putting the pistoles into the bag again, addressed himself to me, saying, "This is the right time "for us to go to the levee of my master, who "commonly rises about noon. It is near the hour, and I suppose he is up."

This was the case, we found Don Matthias in his morning gown, lolling in an easy chair, over an arm of which he had tilted one of his legs, and possed himself by leaning with his body the other way, and rasping tobacco; while he talked to a footman, who for the present did the duty of his valet de chambre. "My lord, (said the steward to him) here is "a young man whom I take the liberty to

" present as one fit to fill the place of the va" let whom you dismissed two days ago: Me-

" lendez your draper recommends him, af" furing me that he is a lad of merit, and I

"hope your lordship will be very well satis"fied with his behaviour." "Enough, (answered the young lord) since you introduce
him to me, I receive him into my service with
implicit faith, and make him my valet de
chambre.

chambre. So, that affair is settled: but, Rodriguez, (added he) let us talk of fomething elfe: you are come very opportunely; for I was just going to fend for you. I have bad news to tell you, my dear Rodriguez! You must know I had ill luck at play last night. Together with an hundred piftoles which I had about me, I have lost two hundred more on my parole; and you know of what importance it is for people of quality to difcharge that fort of debts; it is indeed the only kind which we are obliged in point of honour to pay; and we do not give ourselves much concern about the rest: you must therefore find two hundred pistoles immediately, and fend them to the countess of Pedrosa." " Sir, (faid the steward) it is sooner said than " done. Where shall I get that sum, to " please you? I have not been able to finger " one farthing of your tenants, let me threa-" ten as hard as I can; and yet I am obliged " to maintain your family in an honourable " way, though I fweat blood and water in " procuring wherewithal to defray the ex-" pence. True, indeed, I have hitherto, " thank heaven! made shift: but I am now " reduced to fuch extremity that I know not " what faint in heaven to invoke." " All " these harangues are useless, (cried Don Mat-" thias, interrupting him) and you worry me " with your reflections. Don't you imagine, " Rodriguez, that I will change my dispo-" fition, and divert myfelf with looking into

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" my own affairs. An agreeable amusement, " truly, for a man of pleasure like me!" "Have " a little patience, (replied the fteward) at " the rate you go on, I foresee that you will " be rid of that care in a very fhort time." "You fatigue me, (faid the young lord, in " a paffion) you murder me. - Give me leave " to ruin myself imperceptibly; I tell you, " I want two hundred piftoles; and I must " have them." " I'll go then (faid Rodri-" guez) and have recourse to the little old man who has already lent you money at " high interest." " You may, if you please, " have recourse to the devil, (answered Don " Matthias,) provided I have the two hun-" dred piftoles, I fhall give myfelf no farther " trouble about the matter."

Just as he had pronounced these words in a hafty and discontented manner, the steward went away, and a young man of quality called Don Antonio Centelles, came in. " What is the matter? (faid this last to my master) thou art cloudy, my friend: I perceive indignation in thy countenance. What can have put you into this bad humour? I'll lay a wager, it was the man whom I met going out." "Yes, (replied Don Matthias) it was my steward: every time he comes to speak with me, I fuffer for one quarter of an hour, by his talking about my affairs, and faying that I have quite exhaufted my finances. Impertinent beaft! he cannot say that he loses by me, I'm fure." "Why, child, (faid Don Antonio)

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Antonio) I am in the fame condition; having a factor not a whit more reasonable than thy steward: when the rogue, in obedience to my repeated orders, brings money for me, one would think, he gave it out of his own pocket. He overwhelms me with reflections." "Sir, (fays he) you are undone, your rents are feized"---" Upon which, I am obliged to cut him short, in order to put an end to his ridiculous discourse." "The misfortune is, (faid Don Matthias) we cannot live without these people, who are necessary evils." " They are so, (replied Centelles) but hark'ee (added he, laughing with all his might) there's a comical thought come into my head: a most incomparable conception! by which we may convert those scenes which we have with them, into mirth; and divert ourselves with that which now gives us fo much uneafinefs. Let me demand of thy steward all the money thou fhalt have occasion for; while thou dost the fame by my manager; then they may moralize as they please, we can hear them with great composure; because thy steward will shew me thy accounts, and my factor will entertain thee with mine; I shall hear of nothing but thy profusion, and thou wilt see nothing but mine. This will be admirable fport."

A thousand bright strokes succeeded this fally, and mightily diverted the young lords, who conversed together with a great deal of vivacity; until their discourse was interrupted

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by Gregorio Rodriguez, who returned with a little old man almost quite bald. Don Antonio would have gone away, faying, " Adieu, "Don Matthias, I shall see you by and by: " at prefent, you have doubtless, some seri-" ous affair to discuss with these gentlemen." "O, not at all, (replied my mafter) stay, it " is no fecret. That discreet old person whom "you fee, is an honest man, who lends me " money at the rate of twenty per cent." " How! twenty per cent. (cried Centelles, " with an air of aftonishment) Egad, I con-" gratulate thee upon being in fuch good " hands! I am not so kindly dealt with, and " may fay that I purchase silver at the price " of gold; I commonly borrow at the rate " of forty in the hundred," " Heavens! " what extortion! (exclaimed the old usurer) " do these knaves ever think of anotherworld? " I am not at all furprized at the hue and cry " raifed against people who lend upon interest. It is the exorbitant profit which some exact, that ruins our honour and reputation: if all my brethren were like me, we should not " be so much reviled; for my sole view in lending, is to befriend my fellow-creatures. "Ah! if times were as they have been, I " would offer you my purse without interest: " and truly, in spite of the present scarcity, " I can scarce prevail upon myself to take "twenty per cent. But for my part, I believe " money has retired again within the bowels of the earth: there is no fuch thing to be had,

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" had, for which reason; I am obliged to

" retrench my benevolence.

" How much do you want?" (added he, addreffing himself to my master.) " I must have two hundred pistoles," (replied Don Matthias.) "Here are four hundred in a bag, (faid the ufurer) you shall have one half." So faying, he pulled from under his cloak a blue bag, which feemed to be the very fame which the peafant Talego had left with the five hundred pistoles, in the hands of Rodriguez. I foon knew what to think of the matter, and found that Melendez had not praifed the steward's understanding without cause. The old man having emptied the bag on the table, began to count the money; my mafter was inflamed with defire of possession, at the fight; and ftruck with the totality of the fum, faid to the usurer, "Signior Descomulgado, " I have made a very wife reflection, truly! "What a fool I am! to borrow no more than " what is absolutely necessary to disengage my " parole, without confidering that I have not " a penny in my purse. I shall be obliged to " have recourse to you to-morrow; therefore, " to fpare you the trouble of coming back, I " think it will not be amis to pocket the " whole four hundred." " My lord, (faid " the usurer) a part of this money was de-" figned for a good licentiate, who has fome " fat benefices which he charitably employs " in perfuading young girls to retire from the " world, and in furnishing their retreats! But

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"fince you have occasion for the whole sum, "it is at your service: all that I desire is suf"ficient security." "Oh! as for security."
"(faid Rodriguez, interrupting him, and tak"ing a paper out of his pocket) you shall be
"fatisfied: here is an order to be signed by
"Don Matthias, for sive hundred pistoles,
"upon one of his tenants, called Talego, a
"rich farmer of Mondejan." "Very well,
"(replied the usurer) I never make many
"words." Upon which the steward presented a pen to his master, who without reading the order, set his name to the bottom,
whistling all the while.

whistling all the while. This affair being ended, the old man took his leave of my patron, who ran and embraced him, faying, "Till our next meeting, Sig-"nior usurer, I am wholly yours: I don't "know why people of your profession are " branded with the name of rogues: for my "own part, I think you are very necessary " and serviceable to society: you are the con-" folation of a thousand heirs, and the re-" fource of all those lords whose expence ex-"Thou art in the " ceeds their income." " right (cried Centelles) usurers are very ho-" nest people, whom we never can honour " enough: I will, in my turn, embrace this " gentleman, on account of his twenty per "cent." With these words, he approached and hugged the old man; and thefe two beaus, for their diversion, began to push him backward and forward one to another, like a ball VOL. I between between two tennis-players. After he had been tossed to and fro a good while, they let him go with the steward, who was more deserving than he, of their embraces, and of something else also.

Rodriguez and his understrapper being gone, Don Matthias fent the half of his pistoles to the countess of Pedrosa, by the footman who was present, and secured the rest in a long, embroidered, filk purse, which he commonly wore in his pocket. Very well fatisfied with seeing himself in cash, he said to Don Antonio, with a gay air, "What shall "we do to day? Let us confult about it." " You speak like a sensible man; (replied Cen-" telles) with all my heart, let us deliberate." While they were confidering how to fpend the day, two other lords arrived: these were Don Alexo Segiar and Don Fernand de Gamboa, both of them about the age of my master, that is, between eight and twenty and thirty. These four cavaliers, at meeting, hugged one another so heartily, that one would have thought they had not met for ten years before; then Don Fernand, who was a jovial companion, addressing himself to Don Matthias and Don Antonio, faid, "Gentlemen, where do " you intend to dine to-day? If you are not " engaged, I'll conduct you to a tavern where " you shall drink nectar. I supped there last " night, and left it only this morning, be-" tween five and fix o'clock." " Would to " heaven (cried my master) that I had done " the

" the same: in which case, I should not have

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" loft my money." "As for me, (faid Centelles) I treated myless felf last night with a new diversion; for I " love variety in my pleasures, which alone " makes life agreeable. A friend of mine " carried me to the house of a farmer of the revenue, a gentleman who does his own " buliness together with that of the state." "There I saw magnificence and taste, the en-" tertainment being elegant enough. But I " was mightily diverted with the ridiculous " behaviour of the tax-gatherer himself, who, "tho' the most plebeian of his class, assumed the man of quality; and his wife, though "horribly ugly, affected the airs of a beauty, and faid a thousand filly things, seasoned with the Biscayan accent, which rendered "them still more remarkably foolish. Befides, "there were at table, four or five children, "with their tutor; fo that you may eafily con-

" ceive how I was diverted with this family-" fupper."

"And I, gentlemen, (faid Don Alexo Se-"giar) supped at the house of Arsenia the " actress. We were fix in all; Arfenia, Flo-" rimonda, with a coquette of her acquain-" tance, the marquis of Zeneta, Don Juan of "Moncada, and your humble fervant. We " fpent the night in drinking and fpeaking "bawdy. Heavens! what pleasure! Tis true, " indeed, Arfenia and Florimonda have not

much genius, but their wantonness supplies M 2 ee the 244 The ADVENTURES of

"the place of wit. They are merry, brifk,
romping creatures, and I love them a thoufand times better than your precise women
of fense."

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CHAP. IV.

How Gil Blas became acquainted with the valets of the beaus.—The admirable secret they imparted to him, of acquiring the reputation of a man of wit, at a small expence; and the singular oath which they obliged him to take.

I N this manner did these lords continue the L conversation, until Don Matthias, whom, in the mean time, I helped to dress, was ready to go abroad. Then he bad me follow him, and all the beaus together set out for the tavern, to which Don Fernand de Gamboa had proposed to conduct them. As I walked in the rear, in company with three other valets, (for each of the cavaliers had one,) I observed, not without wonder, that these three domestics copied the air and manner of their respective masters. Having saluted them as their new comrade, they returned the civility, and one among them, after having observed me some minutes, faid, "Brother, I perceive that you have ne-"ver as yet ferved a young lord," "No, "indeed, (answered I,) it is not long since I " came to Madrid." " So I suppose, (repli-"ed he) you fmell ftrong of the country; you " feem timorous and aukward, and there is a "ftiffness in your behaviour; but, no matter,

"we will foon polish you, take my word."
"I am afraid you flatter me, (said I to him.)"

"Not at all, (he replied) if you was the great-"eft blockhead in the universe, we shall be

" able to make you pass: you may depend

" upon it."

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This was enough to make me understand that my confederates were brave lads, and that I could not be in better hands, in order to become a pretty fellow. When we arrived at the tavern, we found an entertainment ready, which Signior Don Fernand had the precaution to bespeak in the morning; our masters fat down to table, and we flood ready to ferve them: then they began to talk with such gayety, that I was delighted to hear them. I was very much diverted with their different characters, thoughts, and expressions; their fire! their fallies of imagination, made me believe them a new species of men! When the dessert was upon the table, we brought in a great number of bottles of the best spanish wine: and left them, to go and dine by ourselves, in a little hall where the cloth was laid on purpose.

I soon perceived that the knights, my companions, had more merit than I at first imagined: they not only assumed the manners of their masters, but even affected their very language, and these rascals succeeded so well, that (the quality air excepted) there was no difference: I admired their free and easy deportment; was charmed with their wit, and de-

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spaired of ever being so agreeable. The valet of Don Fernand (because his master treated ours) performed the honours of the banquet; and that nothing might be wanting, called the landlord, faying, " Master Andrew Mantua-" no, give us ten bottles of your very best "wine, and according to custom, add them to my master's bill." "With all my heart, " (replied the landlord) but, Mr Gafpard, you "know that Signior Don Fernand owes me a " good many entertainments already; and if by "your means I could touch a little money"--"Oh! (said the valet, interrupting him) give "yourself no trouble about what he owes " you: I'll answer for it: my master's debts " are as good as gold: 'tis true indeed, fome "unmannerly creditors have feized our rents; "but we shall obtain a replevy very foon; " and then we shall discharge your bill with-"out fo much as examining the articles." Mantuano brought the wine, notwithstanding the rents being feized; and we drank it in expectation of the replevy. It was a good jest to fee us, every moment, toasting one another, under the furnames of our mafters: Don Amtonio's valet giving the name of Gamboa to Don Fernando's fervant, and Don Fernando's footman honouring Don Antonio's valet with that of Centelles: they called me Silva, and by degrees, we got as drunk under those borrowed names, as our mafters to whom they properly belonged. Though ed

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Though I did not thine to much as my companions, they did not fail to express their approbation of me. "Silva, (faid one of the " archeft among them) we shall make some-" thing of thee, my friend: I perceive thou " haft a fund of genius, but doft not know "how to use it to advantage. The fear of " fpeaking nonfense hinders thee from talking " at a venture; and yet, by this alone, a "thousand people now-a-days acquire the re-" putation of wits. If thou haft a mind to " fhine, give the rein to thy vivacity, and " indifferently risk every thing that comes " uppermost. - Thy blunders will pass for a " noble boldness; and if, after having uttered " a thousand impertinencies, one witticism ef-" capes thee, the filly things will be forgot, " the lucky thought will be remembered, and " the world will conceive an high opinion of "thy merit. This is what our mafters prac-" tife with fuch fuccefs; and what every man " must do, who aspires to the reputation of a " diftinguish'd wit."

Besides, that I was but too fond of passing for a fine genius, the secret which he had disclosed to me seemed so easy, that I was resolved not to neglect it. I put it instantly to the proof, and the wine I had drank contributed to its success; that is, I spoke at random, and had the good fortune to throw out, among a great deal of nonsense, some stalkes of wit, by which I acquired great applause. This coup d'essai silled me with considence: I M 4 collected.

collected all my vivacity to produce fome bright fally, and chance befriended me in the aid) fine fold the remains of

attempt.

"Well, (faid he who spoke to me in the "ftreet) don't you begin to get rid of your " ruft? Thou hast not been two hours in our " company, and art already quite another " man. Thou wilt improve visibly every day. " -See what it is to serve people of quality: " it elevates the mind; while the being valet " to citizens has a quite contrary effect." " Doubtless, (answered I) and therefore I will " henceforth confecrate my fervice to the no-"bility." "That's nobly faid, (cried Don "Fernando's valet, half-seas over) it does not " belong to your citizens to possess such supe-" rior geniuses as we are. Come therefore, " gentlemen, (added he) let us take an oath " never to serve such rapscallions, and swear " to it by the river Styx." We laughed heartily at Gaspard's conceit, which we approved of very much, and took the burlefque oath with our glasses in our hands.

Thus we continued at table until our masters were pleased to retire, which was about midnight; a circumstance which my companions look'd upon as an excess of sobriety. 'Tis true, indeed, these young lords left the tavern in fuch good time, only with a view to visit a famous coquette, who lived in the court-end of the town, and kept open house for your men of pleafure by night as well as by day. She was between thirty and forty years old, still extremely me

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extremely handsome, agreeable, and so confummate in the art of pleasing, that (it was faid) she fold the remains of her beauty at a higher price than that which she had received for its first fruits. There were always in her house two or three other courtezans of the first rank, who contributed not a little to the great concourse of lords who frequented it. They went to play in the afternoon, then supp'd, and spent the night in drinking and making merry. Here our masters staid till morning, and we also, without feeling the time lie heavy on our hands; for while they diverted themfelves with the mistresses, we amused ourselves with the maids; and at last departed all together at break of day, every one going to bed at his own home.

My mafter, getting up as usual about noon, dreffed himself, and went out. I followed him to the house of Don Antonio Centelles, where we found one Don Alvaro de Acunha, an old gentleman, and profess'd rake. All the young sparks, who had an ambition to become fine gentlemen, put themselves under his tuition; by which they were formed for pleasure, taught to make a figure in the world, and to spend their fortunes with a good grace, he himself being under no apprehension of squandering away his own, which was gone long ago. These three cavaliers having saluted one another, Centelles faid to my master. "Faith, "Don Matthias, thou couldst not come at a "better time: Don Alvaro is going to carry M 5

" me to the house of a citizen, who has in-" vited the marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan " de Moncado to dinner, and thou fhalt be " of the party." "What is the name of this "citizen? (faid Don Matthias.)" "He is " called Gregorio de Noriega, (replied Don "Alvaro;) and I will, in two words, give you a character of the man. His father, "who is a rich jeweller, having gone abroad " to negotiate his affairs, left him the enjoy-" ment of a large income: but Gregorio is a " fool, who has a disposition prone to spend " his estate, in doing which he affects the " beau, and would fain pass for a man of spi-" rit, in despite of nature. As he begged me " to take him under my direction, I govern " him at present; and I can affure you, gen-"tlemen, he is in a fair way; his finances be-"ing already pretty well funk." - " I don't " at all doubt it, (cried Centelles:) I fee him " already at the work-house. Come, Don " Matthias, let us make an acquaintance with "him, that we may have some share in his "ruin," "With all my heart, (replied my master;) I love dearly to see the fortune of " these little upstart gentlemen overturned, " because they vainly pretend to rival us in fplendor. Nothing, for example, ever gave " me fo much diversion as the misfortune of " that publican's fon, who was, by his inclination for play, and his vanity in aping the " great, obliged to fell all, to his very house." "Oh! as for him, (faid Don Antonio) he de-"ferves

" ferves no compassion; for he is as great a "coxcomb in his adversity as he was in high " life."

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Centelles and my master repairing with Don Alvaro to the house of Gregorio de Noriega, Mogicon and I went thither also, both of us ravish'd to find a feast going forward, and to have an opportunity of contributing, on our parts, to the ruin of a citizen. As we went in, we perceived feveral people bufy in dreffing the dinner; and the ragouts they were preparing fent forth a favoury steam, that very much prepoffessed the smell in favour of the The marquis of Zeneta and Don Juan of Moncada arrived, and the entertainer feemed to be a great booby, who attempted in vain to assume the carriage of a beau, being a very bad copy of these excellent originals; or rather a downright simpleton, who affected an air of understanding. Imagine to yourself a man of this character in the midst of five jokers, whose fole aim was to exercise their raillery uponhim, and engage him in insupportable expence. "Gentlemen, (faid Don Alvaro, after the first. " compliments) I present to you Signior Gre-" gorio de Noriega, as a complete cavalier. "Besides a thousand other excellent qualifica-

"tions, he possesses an understanding so ex-

" quifitely cultivated, that you cannot take "him amis. He is equally strong on all sub-

" jects, from the most close and subtle logic,

"down to the art of spelling," "Oh! now-

" you flatter me, (faid the citizen, interrupt-" ing M 6

"ing him with a very foolish laugh.) Sig-" nior Alvaro, I may with more justice return "the compliment; for you are, as one may " fay, a very draw-well of erudition." " I " had no defign (replied Don Alvaro) to fifth " for fuch a genteel repartee; but upon my " word, gentlemen, Signior Gregorio cannot " fail of acquiring great reputation in the " world." "For my own part, (faid Don " Antonio) what I am most charmed with, " and what I greatly prefer to his knowledge in orthography, is the judicious choice he " makes of his company: instead of confin-"ing himself to the conversation of citizens, " he cultivates acquaintance with none but " young lords, without giving himself any " trouble about the expence attending it. "There is in this conduct an elevation of fen-" timent, and it may be called fpending one's

" money with tafte and difcernment."

These ironical praises were followed by a thousand more of the same fort, and poor Gregorio was spared by none of them; each of the beaus, in his turn, breaking his jest, the meaning of which the fool did not perceive. On the contrary, he took every thing in a literal fense, and appeared very happy in his guests; nay, he seemed even pleased with being turned into ridicule: and, in short, served them as a butt during the whole time of dinner. They staid with him the remaining part of the day, and all night long; whilst we drank at discretion as well as our masters; and by that time they took leave of the citizen, we were all in an excellent trim.

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Gil Blas fets up for a man of gallantry, and becomes acquainted with a fine lady.

A FTER having refresh'd myself with some hours of sleep, I got up in good humour; and remembring the advice I had received from Melendez, went (my master not being yet awake) and presented my respects to the steward, whose vanity seemed not a little slattered with this instance of my regard. He received me very graciously, and asked if I was not yet familiarized to the way of living practised among young noblemen. I replied, that tho' it was quite new to me as yet, I did not despair of being reconciled to it in time.

And truly this happened very soon; for my humour and disposition suffered a thorough change. From being sedate and pensive, I became a brisk, blundering coxcomb; and the valet of Don Antonio complimented me on my metamorphosis, saying, that there was now nothing wanting to make me illustrious, but an intrigue; which, he affirmed, was absolutely necessary towards finishing the character of a pretty fellow, all our comrades being beloved by some fair lady, and he alone being in possession of the good graces of no less than two women of quality. I believed the rogue told a lie, and said to him, "Monsieur Monsieur Monsie

" gicon,

" gicon, to be fure you are a handsome young of fellow, who have a great deal of wit and " merit; but I cannot conceive how ladies of " quality (especially as you don't live among "fuch) can allow themselves to be charmed " by a man of your condition." " Why tru-" ly (faid he) they don't know who I am. - I "make all my conquests in the dress, and "even in the name of my master. I'll tell " you how: I dress myself like a young no-" bleman; I affume his behaviour, and go out " to take the air; I ogle all the women I fee, "until I meet with one who returns the leer: "her I follow, and find means to fpeak with. "I call myself Don Antonio de Centelles, " and demand an affignation; upon which the " lady stands upon ceremony: I press her to " comply; she yields, et cætera. - By this con-" duct, my child, (added he) I have succeed-" ed in my intrigues, and I advise thee to fol-

" low my example."

I was too ambitious of making a figure not to listen to this advice, and besides felt no aversion to a love intrigue: I therefore resolved to disguise myself like a young nobleman, and go in quest of amorous adventures; but as I durst not dress myself in our own house, for fear of being observed, I took a rich suit of cloaths from my master's wardrobe, and, making it up into a bundle, carried it to the house of a little barber, a friend of mine, where I thought I could dress and undress with more convenience. There I adorned my**felf**

felf to the best of my power, the barber lending a helping hand, in order to set me off; and when we imagined it was impossible to add any thing to my appearance, I walked towards St. Jerome's meadow; from whence, I was persuaded I should not return without having found some intrigue to my liking; but before I was obliged to go so far from home, I started one of a very brilliant ex-

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As I was croffing a bye-street, I saw a lady richly drefs'd, and perfectly genteel, come out of a small house, and get into a hackneycoach that flood before the door; upon which, stopping short to gaze, I bowed to her in such a manner, as to inform her that I was not at all difgusted at her appearance; and she, to let me see she deserved my notice still more than I imagined, lifted up her veil for a moment, and presented a most agreeable countenance to my view: mean while the coach drove off, and I remained in the street, not a little struck with this apparition. "What a "charming figure! (faid I to myself) Bless "me! this is just what I wanted to compleat " my character. If the two ladies who are " in love with Mogicon, are as handsome as this, I pronounce him a lucky knave. I " should be charmed with my fate, had I " fuch a mistress."

While I made these reslections, I cast my eyes by accident towards the house from whence I had seen this lovely creature come out, and

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I flew into the house in an instant, and found, in a pretty handsome parlour, this venerable and discreet matron, who, taking me for a marquis at least, saluted me with great respect, faying, "I don't at all doubt, Sig-" nior, that you have conceived a very bad " opinion of a woman, who, without being " acquainted with you, beckons you into her "house: but perhaps you will think more " favourably of me, when you shall know "that I don't treat every body in the fame " manner. - But you, I suppose, are a court-"lord." - "You are not mistaken, my soul, " (faid I, stretching out my right leg, and " poising my body on my left hip) I am, "without vanity, of one of the best families " in Spain." "I thought so by your ap-" pearance, (she replied) and I own I love to " oblige people of quality: that is my foible. " -I observed you through the window, look-"ing very earnestly (as I suppose) at a lady " who had just parted from me. - Have you " a passion for her? tell me sincerely." " Up-" on the faith of a courtier, (answered I) she " has captivated me. I never faw any thing " more tempting than that creature. - Bring " us together, my good mother, and depend " upon my acknowledgment: fuch good of-" fices rendered to us grandees, feldom pass " unrecompenced."

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"I have already told you, (replied the old " gentlewoman) that I am wholly devoted to " people of quality, and delight in being ufe-"ful to them. I admit into my house, for "instance, certain ladies, whom the exteriors of virtue hinder from receiving their gal-" lants at home; therefore, I accommodate "them with my house, in order to reconcile " the warmth of their complexions with the "rules of decency." "Very well, (faid I " to her) and I suppose you have granted that "favour to the lady in question?" "No, " (she replied) this lady is a young widow of " quality, who wants a lover; but she is so " nice in that particular, that I don't know " if you yourself will please her, notwith-" flanding your extraordinary merit: I have "already presented to her three stout ca-"valiers, whom she treated with disdain." " Adzooks! my dear, (cried I, with an air " of affurance) thou haft no more to do, but " to put me on the scent. I will give thee a " good account of her, believe me. I long " to have a tête à tête with a shy beauty, " having, never, as yet, met with one of that "character." "Well, (said the old Lady) if "you come hither to-morrow, about this "time, your curiofity may be fatisfied." "I " will not fail, (answered I) and we shall see "whether or not a young nobleman, fuch as " I, may taste the pleasure of a conquest." I returned to the house of the little barber,

without defiring any other adventures, but

very

very impatient to fee the iffue of this. Next day, therefore, having been at great pains to fet myself off, I repaired to the old gentlewoman's house, an hour before the appointment. "Signior, (faid she) I see you are " punctual, and am glad of it: for you will "find it well worth your trouble. I have " feen your young widow, and have had fome " discourse with her about you. She has for-" bid me to speak; but I have conceived such " a friendship for you, that I cannot hold my "tongue. You have had the good for-" tune to make an impression on her heart, " and will be happy very foon. Between you " and me, the lady is a delicious morfel; her " husband lived with her but a very short " time; he fleeted away, as it were, like a " shadow; fo that she is as good as a maiden." The good matron, doubtless, meant one of those sprightly maidens, who know how to emoy life without the incumbrance of matrimony.

In a little time, the heroine of the affignation arrived, in a stage-coach, as she had done the day before, adorned with all the pomp of dress. As soon as she appeared in the hall, I began by five or six a-la-mode bows, accompanied with their most fashionable contortions; after which, I approached her with a very familiar air, saying, "My princess, behold a young nobleman, who is enwrapt with your beauty. Your image, since yesterday, has incessantly presented itself to "my

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"my imagination, and expelled a dutches, "who had begun to get footing in my heart."
"The triumph (answered she, taking off her veil) is too glorious for me, and yet I do not perfectly enjoy it: for you young noblemen are prone to change, and your hearts, they say, more difficult to keep than quicksilver." "But, my queen, (I repliced) let us mind the present only, and let futurity shift for itself; you are handsome, "and I amorous; and, if you approve of my passion, let us engage without any further reslection, and embark like sailors, who think only of the pleasures, without person ceiving the perils of their voyage."

So faying, I threw myfelf, in a transport at the feet of my nymph, and, the better to imitate the beaus, prefied her, in a petulant manner, to make me happy. She feemed a little moved by my intreasies, but thought it was too foon to yield; therefore, pushing me gently from her, "Hold, (faid she) you are "too forward, and have the air of a liber-

"tine; I am afraid you are no better than a "downright rake." "O fy, Madam! (cried "I) fure you cannot hate what all ladies of

"fashion love: none but tradesmen's wives "exclaim against libertinism." "You are

" certainly in the right, (she replied) and I " cannot resist such a convincing reason. It

"is in vain, I find, to use grimace with noblemen like you; and the women must

" advance one half of the way. Know then " your

" your victory; (added she, with an appear-" ance of confusion, as if her modesty suf-" fered in the confession) you have inspired " me with fentiments which I never felt be-" fore, and I want only to know who you

" are, that I may determine to choose you " for my lover. I believe, you are a young

" lord, and, moreover, a man of honour.

"But of this I am not affured; and how-" foever I may be prepoffessed in your favour,

"I am resolved not to bestow my affection on

" a person unknown."

It was then I remembered the expedient of Don Antonio's valet, on the same occasions; and, after his example, having a mind to pass for my master, " Madam, said I (to my wi-"dow) I will not refuse to tell you my name, " which I need not be ashamed to own; - did " you never hear of Don Matthias de Silva?" "Yes, (she replied) I have even seen him at " the house of a lady, an acquaintance of " mine." Although I was pretty well stocked with impudence, this answer disconcerted me a good deal; however, I recollected myfelf in an instant, and making an effort of genius, to extricate myself, "Well, then, my " angel, (faid I) you know a lord whom-I "know alfo. Since you must have it, I am " one of the fame family; his grandfather mar-" ried my grand-uncle's sister-in-law: so that " you fee we are very nearly related.—My " name is Don Cæsar, and I am the only son " of the illustrious Don Fernand de Ribera,

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"who was flain fifteen years ago, in a battle that was fought on the frontiers of Portugal. I could describe the action, which was hellishly hot; but that would be losing the precious moments which love prompts us to employ in a more agreeable manner."

After this discourse, I became more presfing and passionate: but all to little effect; the favours which my goddess bestowed upon me, only ferving to make me figh after those which she refused: but though the barbarous creature got into her coach, that waited at the door, I went home very well fatisfied with my good fortune, although I was not yet perfectly happy. If, faid I to myself, I have not been able to obtain the height of my wishes, it is, because my princess is a lady of rank and delicacy, who thinks it indecent to yield to my transports, during the first interview. The pride of her birth has retarded my happiness, which, however, is only delayed for a few days. Not but that I had likewife some fuspicions, that the whole affair was a well concerted trick. But I loved to consider it in the most favourable point of view, and to preserve the advantagious opinion I had conceived of the lady, with whom I had agreed to meet again next day; the hope of accomplishing my wishes, giving me a taste, by anticipation, of the pleasures I expected to enjoy. With

With my fancy full of these smiling images, I returned to the house of my barber, where I changed my drefs, and went to wait upon my master, at a tennis-court, where I knew he was. I found him engaged in play, and even perceived that he had been lucky; for he was none of those phlegmatic gamesters, who enrich or ruin themselves, without changing a feature. In his prosperity he was full of infulting raillery; but very morose when fortune declared against him. Leaving the tennis-court in great good humour, he went directly to the prince's theatre, and I followed him to the play-house door, where giving me a ducat, "Here, Gil Blas, (faid he) fince "I have been lucky, thou shalt feel the ef-" fects of it; go, and enjoy thyself with thy "companions, and about midnight come to " me at the house of Arsenia, where I am to " fup with Don Alexo Segiar." So faying, he went in, and I remained thinking how I should spend my ducat, according to the intention of the donor. I was not long in fufpence; Clarino, Don Alexo's valet, appeared all of a fudden, and I carried him to the next tavern, where we regaled ourselves till twelve o'clock; and from thence repaired together to the house of Arsenia, where he was likewife ordered to rendezvous. A little lacquey opened the door, and introduced us into a parlour, where the waiting-women of Arfenia and Florimonda fat together, laughing as if for

for a wager, while their mistresses entertained our masters above.

The arrival of two merry fellows, who had supped to their satisfaction, could not be difagreeable to chambermaids; especially to those of the actresses; but what was my astonishment, when, in the person of one of them, I beheld my widow! my adorable widow. whom I believed a marchioness, or countess! She feemed no less surprized at feeing her Don Cæsar de Ribera, metamorphosed into the valet de chambre of a beau: however, we obferved one another, without being disconcerted; and both, at one time, were feized with fuch a violent inclination to laugh, that we could not help indulging it. After which, Laura (so was my princess called) taking me aside, while Clarino made up to her companion, very graciously presented her hand, faying, foftly, " Take it, Don Cæfar: in-"flead of reproaching, let us compliment " one another, my friend: you performed " your part to admiration; and I did not be-" have amis in mine. What say you? con-" fels that you took me for one of those fine " ladies of quality, who amuse themselves "with intrigues." "Tis true, (answered I) "but whosoever you are, my queen, I have " not changed my fentiments with my dreft: "I beg you will accept my fervices, and al-" low the valet de chambre of Don Matthias, " to finish that which Don Cæsar had so hap-" pily begun." " Yes, (faid she) I love thee

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"that of another: thou art just such a man that of another: thou art just such a man as I am a woman, and that is the strongest approbation I can bestow: I therefore receive thee into the crowd of my adorers: we shall have no more occasion for the ministry of the old woman: for thou may'st come hither with the utmost freedom: we ladies of the stage live without constraint, and helter-skelter with the men. The effects of this communication are sometimes very visible indeed; but the town laughs at them, and our business, thou knowest, is to divert it."

Here we broke off, because there were others present, and the conversation became general, sprightly, joyous and full of palpable double entendres. Every one bore a part; Arfenia's maid in particular, my lovely Laura, shone very much, and shewed a great deal more wit than virtue. On the other hand, our mafters and the actreffes often burst out into long fits of laughter, which we overheard, and from which we concluded that their discourse was much of the same stamp with our own. If all the fine things, which were faid that night at Arfenia's, had been committed to writing, they would have composed, I believe, a treatise very instructive for youth. In the mean time, the hour of retreat, that is, the dawn, arrived, and we were obliged to part. Clarino followed Don Alexo, and I went home with Don Matthias.

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CHAP. VI.

The conversation of some noblemen, about the players of the prince's company.

THAT day, while my master was dreffing, he received a billet from Don Alexo Segiar, defiring his company at his house, whither he went, and found with him, the marquis of Zeneta, and another young nobleman of a good mien, whom I had never seen before. "Don Matthias, (said Segiar " to my master, presenting the unknown ca-" valier) this is Don Pompeio de Castro, a " relation of mine, who has been at the court " of Portugal, almost from his infancy: he " arrived at Madrid last night, and will set " out to-morrow for Lisbon; so that, as he " can spare me only one day, I am resolved " to enjoy the precious opportunity, and, in " order to make it the more agreeable to him, " have called you and the marquis of Zeneta " to my affistance." Upon this, my master and Don Alexo's kinfman embraced and complimented one another, and I was much pleafed with the discourse of Don Pompeio, who seemed to have a great share of judgment and penetration.

Having dined at Segiar's, these noblemen amused themselves at cards, till the hour of going to play; and then went altogether to the prince's theatre, to see a new tragedy, intitled, the Queen of Carthage. After the Vol. I.

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representation of the piece, they returned, and supped where they had dined: the conversation, at first, turning on the poem they had feen performed, and afterwards upon the actors, " As for the work itself, (cried Don " Matthias) I have no great opinion of it; it makes Æneas still more insipid than he " is represented in the Æneid; but every bo-" dy must agree it was divinely played. What " fays Signior Don Pompeio? he does not " feem to be of my way of thinking." "Gen-" tlemen, (faid that cavalier fmiling) I have " perceived you so much charmed with your " players, and, in particular, with your ac-" treffes, that I ought not to be fo bold as to " fignify my diffent from your opinions." "You are much in the right, (faid Don " Alexo, in a jocular manner) your centures " will be very unreasonable here; and you " ought to shew some respect for our actresses " before us, who are the trumpets of their " reputation. As we drink with them every "day, we can do no less than warrant them " perfect in their vocation; and even give " them certificates, if there be occasion for " it." "I do not at all doubt it, (answered " his relation) and I dare fay you would do " the same for their morals, so much are you " their friends."

"Your comedians at Lisbon (said the mar-"quis of Zeneta, with a sneer) are, doubt-"less, much better than ours." "Yes, certainly, (replied Don Pompeio) at least, there " are some of them who have no defect." And these (resumed the marquis) may depend upon your certificate." "I have no connection with them, (faid Don Pompeio) and as I never enter into their parties of pleasure, can judge of their merit without prejudice. But do you really (added he) think your company so excellent?" " No. faith! (faid the marquis) I believe no fuch thing; and provided you give me leave to defend a very finall number of the players, " I will willingly give up all the rest. Won't " you allow that she who played the part of Dido, is an admirable actress? did she not " represent that queen with all the dignity and grace which is conformable to the idea " we have of her? and did not you admire " her art in engaging the mind of the spectator, and making him feel the emotions " of all those passions that are expressed? " She may be faid to be confummately skilled " in all the refinements of declamation." "I agree (faid Don Pompeio) that she knows how to awake and touch the passions of the audience, no player had ever more feeling, and, on the whole, her representation is " very fine. But she is far from being a per-" fect actress. I was shocked with two or " three things in her performance. When " she would express surprize, she rolls her " eyes in fuch an extravagant manner, as very " ill becomes the deportment of a princess. "Add to this, that in raising her voice, N 2

" which is naturally low, she corrupts the " fweetness of it, and produces a very dif-" agreeable croaking: besides, in more places

" than one, she gave reason to suspect that

" she did not very well understand her part:

" but, however, I am inclined to impute this " rather to inattention than want of capa-

" city."

" By what I can see, (said Don Matthias " to the critic) you will scarce write a pane-" gyric on our actreffes." " Pardon me, (re-" plied Don Pompeio) I can discover great " talents through their defects. I own, I was " enchanted with that actress, who performed the part of a chambermaid in the inter-" ludes: The has a fine genius, treads the " ftage gracefully, and every witticism she " utters, is seasoned with a farcastic smile, " full of charms, which very much enhances " the value of what is faid. She may, in-" deed, be blamed for indulging her fire, " fometimes, a little too much, and transgreffing the bounds of modest affurance. "But we must not be too severe; and I could " only wish that she would correct one bad - habit she has contracted. Oft-times, in the " middle of a ferious scene, she interrupts the se performance all of a fudden, by yielding " to a filly defire of laughing, with which " she is seized. You'll say she is applauded " by the pit, even at these times: there, I

" own, she is lucky."

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"Well, what do you think of the men? " (faid the marquis, interrupting him) fure-" ly you'll charge them full volley, fince you " have been so unmerciful to the women." " No, (said Don Pompeio) I think you have " fome promifing young actors; and am par-" ticularly pleased with that fat comedian " who acted the part of Dido's prime mi-" nister: he repeats very naturally, and de-" claims just as they do in Portugal. " If " he can please you, (said Segiar) you must " be charmed with the action of him who " played the part of Æneas. Is not he a " great comedian! an original!" " Very original! (replied the critic) his cadence is " quite peculiar, and his tones abundantly " shrill: he almost always deserts nature; " hurries over the words which contain the " fentiment, and places the emphasis where " it should not be; making pauses even on " articles and conjunctions. He diverted me " very much; particularly, when he expressed to his confident, the violence he did him-" felf, in abandoning the princes; never was " grief more comically expressed." " Soft-" ly, cousin, (replied Don Alexo) thou wilt " make us believe, by and by, that there is " not a great deal of taste at the court of " Portugal. Dost thou know that the actor " of whom we fpeak, is reckoned a phœnix? " Didst thou not hear what claps of applause " he obtained? A plain proof that he is far " from being contemptible." "That is no

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proof at all (answered Don Pompeio:) gentlemen, (added he) let us not, I beg of you, lay any stress upon the applause of the pit, which is often bestowed very unseasonably:—nay, more seldom on true merit than on false. As Phædrus observes, by an ingenious fable, which I beg leave to repeat. Here it is.—

" The inhabitants of a certain city being " affembled in public, to fee pantomimes, " there was, among the performers, a favou-" rite actor whom they applauded every mo-" ment. This buffoon having a mind to " close the scene with a new kind of repre-" fentation, appeared alone upon the stage, " flooped down, covered his head with his " cloak, and squeaking like a pig, acquitted " himself so well, that the audience actually " imagined he had one under his cloaths: " they ordered him therefore to strip; which " he having done, and nothing appearing, " the whole affembly thundered applause.-" A peafant who happened to be one of the " spectators, shocked at these expressions of " admiration, cried, gentlemen, you have no " cause to be charmed with that buffoon, " who is not fuch an exquisite actor as you " imagine: I can play the pig better than he, " and, if you doubt it, come hither again to-" morrow at this hour. The people pre-" polleffed in favour of their pantomimes, re-" affembled next day in greater numbers, ra"ther to his the peasant than see what he could do. The two rivals appearing on the stage, the bussioon began, and was applicated more than ever: then the countryman stooping in his turn, and mussing his head in his cloak, pinched the ear of a real pig, which he held under his arm, and made it squeak most piercingly; nevertheless, the audience gave the preference to the pantomime; and hooted the peasant, who all of a sudden, producing the pig to the spectators, gentlemen, said he, it is not me whom you his, but this poor pig himsels:
"such excellent judges you are!"

" Cousin, (said Alexo) thy fable is too se-" vere: but notwithstanding thy pig, we will " not give up our opinion. Let us change " the discourse (added he) I am tired of this " subject. So, thou wilt depart to morrow, " in spite of my desire to enjoy thy company " a little longer?" " I wish I could make a " longer stay in Madrid, (replied his kinf-" man) but it is not in my power. I have " told you already, that I came to the court " of Spain, about an affair of state; and at " my arrival yesterday, had an audience of " the prime minister, whom I shall see again " to-morrow morning, immediately after " which, I shall set out on my return to Lif-" bon." " Thou are become altogether Por-" tuguese, (said Segiar) and in all likelihood, " wilt never return to live in Madrid." "I « be-N 4

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believe I shall not: (answered Don Pompeio) for I am so happy as to be beloved by
the king of Portugal; and enjoy a great
deal of pleasure at his court. But notwithstanding his kindness to me, would you believe that I have been on the point of quitting his dominions for ever?" "Pray tell
us the reason! (said Don Alexo.)" "With
all my heart; (answered Don Pompeio) and
at the same time, will relate the story of
my life."

CHAP. VII. and the comment of the property and the comment of the

The History of Don Pompeio de Castro.

ON Alexo (added he) knows that while I was yet a boy, I resolved to carry arms; and that feeing our own country in profound peace, I went to Portugal, from whence I passed over into Africa with the duke of Braganza, who gave me employment in the army under his command. Being a younger brother of very small fortune, I was under a necessity of signalizing myself in such a manner as to attract the notice of the general; and did my duty so well, that the duke promoted and put me in a condition to ferve with honour. After a long war, the iffue of which you all know, I attached myself to the court, and the king, upon the recommendation of the general officers, gratified me with a confiderable pension. Sensible of this monarch's generolity, I loft no occasion of manifesting

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my gratitude by my affiduity; and was always in attendance, at those hours in which people are permitted to pay their respects; by which behaviour, I insensibly acquired the love of that prince, who honoured mes with new favours.

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Having one day distinguished myself at the ring, and a bull-fight that preceded it, the whole court commended my ftrength and address; and when I returned home, loaded with applause, I found a billet importing, that a' lady, the conquest of whom ought to flatter me more than all the honour I had that day acquired, wanted to converse with me; and that I should in the twilight repair to a certain place that was described. This letter gave me more pleasure than all the praise I had received, and I imagined that the person who wrote it, must be a lady of the first quality. You may eafily guess that I flew to the rendezvous, where an old woman being in waiting, to ferve as a guide, introduced me by a little garden-door, into a great house, and shut me in a rich closet, faying, "Stay here until I in-" form my mistress of your arrival." I perceived a great many curious things in this clofet, which was enlightened by a great number of wax-candles; but my fole view in confidering its magnificence, was to confirm myfelf in the opinion I had already conceived of the lady's rank. If all that I saw seemed to assure me she was a person of the first quality; when the appeared, I was convinced of it, by her N 5 noble

noble and majestic air. Nevertheless I was mistaken.

"Signior cavalier, (faid she) after the advances I have made, it would be ridiculous to conceal the tender fentiments I have for you, which, however, were not inspired by that merit you have this day shewn before the whole court. That only has haftened the discovery: for I have feen you more than once, and enquired into your character, which pleafed me fo much, that I determined to follow my inclination. Don't imagine, added she, that you have made a conquest of some dutchess. I am no other than the widow of a simple officer of the king's guards: but what makes your victory still more glorious, is the preference I give you, to one of the greatest lords of the kingdom. The duke of Almeyda is in love with me, and spares nothing to inflame me with a mutual paffion: but hitherto he has been unfuccessful, and I fuffer his addresses only through vanity."

Though I found by her discourse that I had to do with a coquet, I thought myself very much obliged to fortune for this adventure: Donna Hortensia (so was the lady called) was still in the prime of youth; and I was dazzled with her beauty: besides, she offered me the possession of a heart which would not yield to the addresses of a duke. What a triumph was this for a young Spanish cavalier! I accordingly threw myself at her seet, thanked her for her goodness, said all that a man of

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gallantry could utter on such an occasion, and the had reason to be satisfied with the transports of my gratitude. We parted the best friends in the world, after having agreed to see one another every night on which she should be disengaged from the duke of Almeyda, and this she promised to advertise me of, punctually; in which she did not fail, so that, in a word, I became the Adonis of this new Venus.

But the pleafures of life are far from being eternal! Whatever measures the lady could take to conceal our correspondence from my rival, he did not fail to get notice of the whole of what it was fo much our interest to keep from his knowledge. A malecontent chambermaid informed him of the affair; and that lord, naturally generous, but withal haughty, jealous and paffionate, was incenfed at my prefumption: rage and jealoufy took possesfion of his foul; and following the dictates of his fury, he refolved to avenge himself of me in an infamous manner. One night, while I was with Hortenfia, he waited for me at the little garden-door, attended by all his footmen, armed with clubs; and as foon as I came out, making these wretches seize me, ordered them to cudgel me to death. "Strike, faid he, and let the audacious villain perish under your hands; for fo I am resolved to punish his infolence." He had no fooner fpoke thefe words than his people affaulted me all together, and gave me so many blows, that I lay stretched N 6 WINGALL

stretched upon the ground without sense or motion. After which, they retired with their mafter, who had regaled himself with this cruel execution; and I remained as they left me, during the rest of the night. At break of day some people happened to pass, and perceiving still some life in me, were so charitable as to carry me to the house of a surgeon; luckily my wounds were not mortal, and I fell into the hands of a skilful artist, who made a perfect cure of me in two months: at the end of which time, I repaired again to court, and refumed my former way of living, fave that I never went back to Hortenfia, who on her part took no step to see me again, because the duke, on these terms, had pardoned her infidelity. I compare the base of the page

My adventure being univerfally known, and nobody fulpecting my courage, levery one was aftonished to see me as tranquil as if I had not received an affront: for I imparted my thoughts to no man breathing, and feemed to be void of all refentment; so that people did not know what to think of my feigned infenfibility. Some believed that, notwithstanding my courage, the rank of my antagonist kept me in awe, and obliged me to digeft the injury: others, with more reason, suspected my silence, and looked upon the peaceable appearance I put on, as a deceitful calm. Of this opinion was the king, who did not think me a person that would leave such an outrage unpunished; but believed that I would not fail to

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revenge myself as soon as I could find a favourable opportunity. That he might know whether or not he guessed my sentiments aright, he called me one day into his closet, where he faid, "Don Pompeio, I know the accident which has happened to you, and am, I confess, surprised at your tranquility, which must certainly be dissimulation." "Sire, I replied, I know not who was the aggressor, having been attacked in the dark by people unknown; fo, that I must console myself for the misfortune as well as I can." "No, no, (faid the king) you must not think to dupe me with that evalion which is all diffembled: I have been informed of the whole affair; the duke of Almeyda has given you a mortal affront. You are a gentleman and a Castilian, and I know what these qualities oblige you to do. You have formed a resolution to avenge yourself. Communicate your scheme to me. I insist upon it—and don't be afraid that you shall have cause to repent of making me your confident." slobed mitter incomments ils to

"Since your majesty (answered I) commands it, I will discover my sentiments. Yes, Sir, I intend to take vengeance for the affront I have suffered. Every one who bears the name of a gentleman is accountable for it to his family. You know the unworthy treatment I have received; and I purpose to affassinate the duke of Almeyda, to revenge myself, in a manner suitable to the offence. I will plunge a poignard in his breast, or shoot him through

through the head, and escape, if I can, into This is my defign." " It is a violent one, (faid the king) nevertheless, I cannot condemn it, after the cruel outrage which the duke of Almeyda has committed upon you. He is worthy of the chaffifement you referve for him: but do not execute your enterprise in a hurry. Leave it to me to find out an expedient for bringing you to an accommodation." "Ah, Sir! (cried I, very much chaggined) why did you oblige me to reveal my fecret? What expedient can -" " If I don't find one to your fatisfaction, (faid he, interrupting me) you may put your resolution in practice. I don't intend to abuse the confidence you have reposed in me, and will by no means berray your honour. So that you may make yourfelf easy on that fcore."

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I was greatly at a loss to know in what manner the king pretended to terminate this affair in an amicable manner: and this is the method he took. In a private conversation with the duke of Almeyda, "My lord, (said he) you have injured Don Pompeio de Castro; and as you are not ignorant of his being a man of illustrious birth, and a gentleman whom I love on account of his faithful services, you ought to give him satisfaction." "I am ont of an humour to refuse it; (answered the duke) if he complains of my wrath, I am ready to do him justice in the field." You must give him another fort of reparation (replied the king) a Spanish gentleman

"understands the point of honour too well, " to fight openly with a fecret affaffin. I can " give you no other name, and you cannot "expiate the ind gnity of your action, any "other way, thanby prefenting your enemy "with a cane, and submitting to a retalia-"tion." "O heavens! (cried the duke) What, "Sir! would you have a man of my rank " condescend to humble himself before a fini-" ple cavalier, and allow himself to be cared!" " No, (replied the monarch) I will make Don "Pompeio promise that he will not strike you." "Only ask pardon for the violence you com-" mitted, and prefent him with a cane-that " is all I expect of you." " And that is too "much to expect from me, Sir; (faid the " duke, interrupting him haftily) I will ra-" ther continue exposed to the fecret shafts of "his revenge." "Your life is dear to me, " (faid the king) and my defire is that this af-"fair may have no bad confequences. To "bring it to a conclusion the less disagreeably "for you, I will be the only witness to that " fatisfaction which Linfift upon your making "to the Spaniard." o in sign of the are

The king had occasion for all his power over the duke, to bring him to this mortifying condescension. However, he succeeded; and afterwards, sending for me, recounted the discourse he had with my enemy, and asked if I would be fatisfied with the reparation agreed upon between them. "I answered in the affirmative, and gave my word and honour, that "far

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" far from striking the offender, I would not " even accept of the cane he should present to " me." Things being regulated in this manner, the duke and I, one day, went at a certain hour to the king, who shutting himself up with us in the closet, "Come (faid he to the "duke) acknowledge your fault and deserve "to be forgiven." Upon this, my enemy made his apology, and prefented me with the cane which he had in his hand. "Don Pom-" peio, (faid the monarch to me, that in-"ftant,) take the cane, and let not my pre-" fence hinder you from fatisfying your in-"jured honour: I acquit you of the promise "you made, not to strike the duke." "No, " Sir, (answered I) it is sufficient that he sub-" mits to be beaten; an injured Spaniard afks " no more." "Well, (replied the king) fince " you are contented with that satisfaction, you " may now enjoy the privilege of a regular " process: measure your swords, and deter-" mine your quarrel like men of honour." " It is what I ardently defire! (cried the duke " of Almeyda, with precipitation) and that " alone is capable of confoling me for the " fhameful condescension I have made."

So faying, he went away full of rage and confusion, and two hours after, sent to let me know that he waited for me in a private place. Thither I repaired, and found that lord in a humour to fight heartily. He was not quite forty, and wanted neither courage nor skill, so that the match was pretty equal. "Come, "Don

Don Pompeio, (said he) let us decide our "difference here: both of us ought to be ex-" asperated to the highest pitch; you, for the " treatment you have received at my hands; "and I, for having asked your pardon." With these words, he drew upon me, so suddenly, that I had no time to make any reply; and pushed with great vigour; but I had the good fortune to parry all his thrusts, and attacked him in my turn; when I found I had to do with an antagonist who knew how to defend, as well as to affault; and I don't know what might have happened, if he had not made a false step in retreating, and fallen backward. I ftopt immediately, and bid him get up - and he answered, "Why do you spare " me? I am injured by your pity." "I will " not wrong my glory fo much (faid I) as to " take the advantage of your misfortune; get " up once more and let us fight it out."

"Don Pompeio (said he, rising) after this instance of your generosity, honour will not permit me to use my sword against you. "What would the world say of me should I "kill you? I should be looked upon as a "coward, who had taken the life of a person "who had it in his power to deprive me of mine. I can, therefore, no longer sight against you, and I feel the warm transports of gratitude succeed those furious emotions which reigned within my breast. Don Pom-

"Let us even go farther — and be friends." Ah,

" Ah, my lord, cried I, I embrace the agree-" able proposal with joy! I vow the most fin-" cere friendship: and as the first proof, pro-" mise never to, set foot within the door of " Donna Hortenfia, even though she should " desire to see me. " It is I, (said he) who " must yield that lady to you - You have a " juster title to her, since her inclination is " fixed upon you." "No, no, (cried I, in-" terrupting him) you love her, and the fa-" yours which she might bestow upon me, " would give you pain; I facrifice them, " therefore, to your repose." "Ah, too ge-" nerous Castilian! (replied the duke, lock-" ing me in his arms) I am charmed with " your fentiments! What remorfe do they " produce within me! With what grief-with " what shame do I restect on the outrage you " received! The farisfaction I gave you in the " king's closet, seems now too slight. I will " make a better reparation for the injury, and " in order to efface the dishonour of it intire-" ly, I offer one of my nieces to you in mat-" riage, she is a rich heiress, not yet fifteen, " and still more beautiful than young."

I made my compliments to the duke, in fuch expressions of acknowledgment, as the honour of entering into his alliance inspired; and in a few days, married his niece. The whole court congratulated him on his generosity to a gentleman whom he had covered with ignominy, and my friends rejoiced with me, on the happy conclusion of an adventure which

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which seemed to promise a more melancholy issue. Since that time, gentlemen, I live agreeably at Lisbon, beloved by my wife, of whom I am still fond; the duke of Almeyda gives me every day fresh proofs of his friendship; and I dare boast of being pretty well with the king of Portugal. The importance of this my journey to Madrid, which I undertook by his order, being a sufficient evidence of his esteem.

CHAP. VIII.

By what accident Gil Blas was obliged to feek a new place.

SUCH was the story that Don Pompeio recounted, and which the valet of Don
Alexo and I overheard, although they had
taken the precaution of sending us away before it was begun: but instead of retiring, we
stopt at the door which we had left half open,
and from thence lost not a word of what was
said. After this, the noblemen set in to drinking, but their debauch did not last till day;
because Don Pompeio, who was to attend the
prime minister in the morning, was very desirous of a little rest. Accordingly, the marquis of Zeneta and my master embracing that
cavalier, bid him adieu, and left him with his
kinsman.

We went to bed for this time, before morn, and Don Matthias, when he waked, invested me with a new employment. "Gil Blas, (faid

(faid he) take paper and ink, and write two or three letters which I will dictate; henceforward thou art my fecretary." Good, (faid I to myself) another addition to my functions: as a lacquey, I follow my mafter every where; as a valet de chambre, help him to drefs; and write under him as his fecretary: heaven be praised! I act, like Hecate, in a threefold capacity. "Thou dost not know, added he, what I am about; which is briefly this .- But be fecret — for thy life shall answer it. fometimes meet with people who boaft of their good fortune in love intrigues; I am refolved, in order to excel them all, to have always in my pocket feigned letters from women, which I will read on fuch occasions. This will afford me fome diversion, and, more happy than those of my fellows, who acquire conquefts only for the pleasure of making them public, I will publish those which I have not had the trouble to make; but remember to disguise thy hand in fuch a manner, as that the billets may not appear to be written by the same person."

Upon this I took paper, pen, and ink, and fat down to obey Don Matthias, who at first dictated a love-letter in these terms:

"YOU was not to-night at the place of affignation. Ah, Don Matthias! what can you fay to justify yourself? How much have I been mistaken, and how well

" have I been punished for having the vanity to think that you would facrifice all the

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" amusements and business of the gay world, to the pleasure of seeing Donna Clara de Mendoza."

The next billet he made me write, was in the name of a lady, who preferred him to a prince; and the last, from one who told him, that, if she was sure of his discretion, she would make a voyage with him to the island of Cythera. He was not fatisfied with dictating these fine epistles: he obliged me also to subscribe them with the names of ladies of quality. Upon which I could not help observing, that I thought it a ticklish affair; but he defired me to keep my advice to myself, until he should have occasion to ask it: I was therefore obliged to execute his commands in filence. This being done, he got up, dress'd, put the letters in his pocket, and went out; and I follow'd him to the house of Don Juan de Moncada, who had invited five or fix gentlemen of his friends to dinner.

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The entertainment was sumptuous, and mirth, the best ingredient in all banquets, reigned during the repast. All the guests contributed to enliven the conversation; some by raillery, and others by recounting exploits of which they themselves were the heroes. My master, unwilling to lose such a fair opportunity of profiting by the letters he had made me write, read them aloud, with such an air of assurance, that (his secretary excepted) every body seemed to believe them genuine.—

Among

Among the gentlemen, before whom he was guilty of this effronterie, there was one Don Lope de Velasco, a very sedate man, who, inftead of rejoicing like the rest at the success of the reader, coldly asked, if the conquest of Donna Clara had cost him dear. - " Almost " less than nothing, (replied Don Matthias:) " fhe made all the advances. Having feen " me in the park, I happened to please her; " upon which I was followed by her order, " and, as foon as the learned who I was, the " wrote to me, appointing an affiguation at " her house in the night, when all the family 24 should be a-bed. I obeyed the summons, " and was introduced to her apartment. - I am " too much of a gentleman to tell what fol-" lowed."

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At this laconic detail the lord of Velasco changed countenance, and it was not difficult to perceive what concern he had in the lady in question. " All these billets (said he, darting a furious look at my mafter) are absolutely " false, and especially that which you boast of " having received from Donna Clara de Men-" doza, than whom there is not a more chafte " young lady in Spain. A gentleman, no " ways your inferior either in birth or personal " merit, has done every thing in his power, " during two whole years, to make an im-" pression on her heart; and scarce has he " been able to obtain the most innocent fa-" yours, tho' he has reason to flatter himself, " that, if she was capable of granting any " other n

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" other kind of indulgence, it would be to " him alone." " Hey-day! who fays any " thing to the contrary? (faid Don Matthias, " with an air of raillery.) - I agree with you, " that the is a lady of honour; and, for my " part, I am a young fellow of honour; con-" sequently you ought to believe, that no-" thing which was not very honourable pass'd " between us." - " Ah! this is too much, " (cried Don Lope, interrupting him:) jest-" ing a-part, you are an impostor. Donna "Clara never made an affignation with you " at night; and I will not fuffer you to blacken " her reputation. - I shall fay no more at pre-" fent," Having thus expressed himself, he looked sternly at the whole company, and retired in fuch a manner, as to make me believe that this affair would have very bad confequences. My master, who was brave enough for a lord of his character, despising the threats of Don Lope, "What a fool there is! " (cried he, burlting into a fit of laughter) " your knights-errant pretended only to main-" tain the beauty of their mistresses; but he, " forfooth, must vindicate the chastity of his.

" gant." Velasco's retreat, which was in vain opposed by Moncada, did not at all disturb the banquet: the cavaliers, without taking much notice of it, continued their mirth, and did not part till next morning at five o'clock, when my master and I went home to bed. I was

" Now this to me seems still more extrava-

overwhelmed with drowfinefs, and hoped to enjoy a good fleep; but I reckoned without my hoft, or rather without our porter, who came and waked me an hour after, telling me, that there was a young man at the gate, who wanted to speak with me. "Ah! curse thee " for a porter, (cried I, yawning) dost thou " confider that I have just now got to bed? " Tell the young man that I am afleep, and " bid him return at another time." " He " must speak with you instantly, (replied he) " for he affures me that the affair will admit " of no delay." At these words I got up, and putting on my breeches and doublet only, went to the door, curfing all the way. --" Friend, (faid I to the young man who " waited for me) let me know, if you please, " what pressing affair procures me the honour " of feeing you so early in the morning?" " I have (answered he) a letter for Don Mat-" thias, to be delivered into his own hand. " He must read it immediately; for it is of " the utmost consequence to him: I beg you " will therefore shew me into his chamber." Thinking it treated of some very important affair, I took the liberty of waking my mafter: "I ask pardon (said I to him) for in-" terrupting your repose; but the impor-" tance -" " What wouldst thou have?" (cried he hastily:) Upon which the young man who accompanied me, faid, "My lord, I " have a letter for you from Don Lope de " Velasco." Don Matthias took, opened, and

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and having read it, said to Don Lope's valet, "Hark'ee, child, I would not get up before noon to make one of the best party of pleafure that ever was proposed; judge then, if I shall rise at six o' clock in the morning to sight.—Thou may'st tell thy master, if he will be in the same place half an hour after twelve, I will meet him there." So saying, he sunk down in his bed, and fell

afleep again with great expedition.

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Between eleven and twelve he got up, and, dreffing with great composure, went out, telling me he would dispense with my attendance; but I was too curious to know the consequence to obey him in this, and therefore walked at fome distance behind him to St. Jerome's meadow, where I perceived Don Lope de Velasco, waiting for him in a resolute manner. The better to observe them, I concealed myfelf, and, from afar, could fee them meet, and begin to fight a moment after. The combat was long, each, in his turn, having pushed his antagonist with great vigour and address: but victory declared for Don Lope, who run my mafter through the body, and, leaving him stretched upon the ground, made off, very well fatisfied with the vengeance he had taken. I ran up to the unfortunate Don Matthias, whom I found without fense, and almost without life. I was melted at the fight, and could not help shedding tears at a death, of which I had been an involuntary instrument. -Notwithstanding my grief, however, I did VOL. I. not

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not forget my own little concerns; but returned home with all hafte, where (without fpeaking a fyllable of the matter) I made up a bundle of my cloaths, among which I threw. by mistake, some of my master's moveables; and when I had carried it to the barber's house. where I had left my intriguing fuit, published through the whole city the fatal accident, of which I was witness: I told it to every body who gave me the hearing, and, in particular, took care to inform Rodriguez of what had happened. He feemed less afflicted with the news than busied about the measures he was to take on this occasion. Having affembled the fervants, he ordered them to follow him; and repairing in a body to St. Jerome's meadow, we took up our master, who, tho' he still breathed, died in three hours after he was carried to his own house. Thus perished Don Matthias de Silva, for having taken it into his head to read forged love-letters at an unseasonable time.

CHAP. IX.

Of the person in whose service he engaged, after the death of Don Matthias de Silva.

A Few days after the funeral of Don Matthias, all his fervants being paid and dismissed, I fixed my abode in the house of the little barber, with whom I began to live in strict friendship; and there I promised myfelf more pleasure than with Melendez. As I did I did not want money, I was in no hurry to inquire about a new place: besides, I was become nice on that point, and refolved to ferve none but the quality for the future; for which reason I intended to examine narrowly into whatever post should occur, believing that there was none too good for me; fo much did I then think the valet of a young nobleman

preferable to all others.

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In the mean time, until fortune should prefent fuch a family as I thought I deserved, I imagined nothing could be more agreeable than to confecrate my leifure to my handsome Laura, whom I had not feen fince that night when we were both so pleasantly undeceived. -I durst not dress in the suit of Don Cæsar de Ribera, which (unless I had assumed it for a difguise) would have made me pass for a downright madman; but my own was still very decent, and being very well equipp'd in stockings, shoes, and hat, I adjusted myself, with the barber's affiftance, in a middle way between Don Cæsar and Gil Blas, and in this condition repaired to Arfenia's house; where, finding Laura alone, in the same parlour where I had feen her before, she no sooner perceived me than she cried, "Ha! are you there? I " thought I had loft you. - Seven or eight " days are paffed fince I gave you the per-

" mission of visiting me: I see you don't

" abuse the liberties in which the ladies in-

" dulge you."

I excused myself on account of my master's

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death, and the business in which I had been engaged; and added, in a very polite manner, that even in the midst of all my cares, the fair Laura had still kept possession of my heart. " Well, then, (faid she) I will reproach you " no more; but own, that I have also thought " of you: and as foon as I heard of the mis-" fortune of Don Matthias, formed'a project " which perhaps will not displease you .--" Some time ago I heard my mistress say, " that she wanted to have a kind of steward " in the house; a young man who should un-" derstand œconomy, and keep an exact ac-" count of the money difburied for house-" keeping. I have cast my eyes on your lord-" ship, and believe you would not be an im-" proper person for that employment." "I " perceive (answered I) that I should acquit " myself in it to a wonder; for I have read " Aristotle's Oeconomics; and as to keeping " accounts, it is my chief excellence. But, " child, (added I) there is one objection to " my engaging in Arfenia's fervice.-" What " may that be?" (faid Laura.) "I have " fworn (I replied) never to serve a plebeian: " nay, I have fworn by Styx; and if Jupiter " himself durst not violate that oath, judge " if a valet ought to regard it."-" Whom " dost thou call plebeians? (said the cham-" ber-maid with an air of disdain) Dost thou " rank actresses with the wives of counsellors " and attorneys? Know, friend, that the ladies of the stage are not only noble but " arch" arch-noble, by the alliances they contract

" with men of quality."

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" If that be the case, my princess, (said I) "I may accept of the place for which you " have destined me, without derogating from " the dignity of my resolution." " Certain-" ly, (she replied) to pass from the family of " a beau into the service of a theatrical he-" roine, is still to maintain the same sphere " of life; for we rank in all respects with the " quality: we keep equipages like them; we " live as well; and, at bottom, ought to hold "the same esteem in civil life." - "Really, " (added she) if we consider a marquis and a " player, thro' the course of a day, we shall " find them upon a pretty equal footing; for, "granting that the marquis, during three " parts of the day, is, by virtue of his blood, " fuperior to the player; the actor, during " the remaining part, is raifed still more above "the marquis by the cue of an emperor or "king whom he represents. This, in my " opinion, invests us with fuch nobility and " grandeur as at least equals us to the people " at court." "O! truly (I replied) you are, " without contradiction, on a level with the " courtiers. What the duce! players, I find, " are not fuch fcums as I imagined; and you " fire me with inclination to ferve fuch ho-" nourable people." "Well, then, (faid she) " come back again in two days: I ask no

" more time to dispose my mistress for thy " reception. I will speak to her in thy be-

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" half; and as I have some interest with her, " am persuaded that thou wilt be admitted into her service."

I thanked Laura for her friendship, and affured her that I was penetrated with gratitude, which I expressed with such transports as left her no room to doubt my fincerity. -We maintained a pretty long conversation together, and it would have lasted longer, had not a little page come to tell my princess that Arsenia wanted her; upon which we parted. I quitted the house of this actress, in the sweet hope of living in it at my ease, in a very short time; and did not fail to return at the time appointed. "I was just expecting thee, (faid "Laura) in order to affure thee, that thou " art now one of the houshold: come, fol-" low me, and I will prefent thee to my mif-"tress." So saying, she carried me into an apartment, compoled of five or fix rooms of a floor, each more richly furnished than the other.

Heavens! what luxury and magnificence! I believed myself in the palace of a vice-queen; or rather thought I saw all the riches in the world amassed together in one place: for there was variety of things produced in different nations; and one might term this apartment the temple of some goddess, to whom every traveller presented an offering of the rarities of his country.—I perceived the divinity seated on a large sattin couch, charming to the eye, and sleek with the steams of sacrifice:

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fhe was in a genteel dishabille, and her fair hands were bufy in preparing a new headdress, in which she was to perform that night, "Madam, (faid her maid) here is the house-" keeper I mentioned .- I can affure you, that " you will not find one more for your pur-" pose." Arsenia looked at me very attentively, and I had the good fortune to please "Aha! Laura, (cried she) there's a " pretty young fellow. I-foresee that I shall "be very well fatisfied with him." Then addressing herself to me, " Child, (faid she) "I like your appearance, and am at a word: "if you ferve me well, you shall have no " cause to complain." I answered, that my whole study and endeavour should be to please her: and feeing that we were agreed, went to fetch my cloaths, and was installed in my new office.

CHAP. X.

Which is as short as the foregoing.

T being near play-time, my mistress bid Laura and me follow her to the theatre. We went accordingly to her tyring-room, where she put off her ordinary dress, and took another more magnificent for her appearance on the stage. The curtain being drawn, Laura conducted and fat down by me in a place, where we could both fee and hear the actors perfectly well. I was difgusted at the greatest part of them, doubtless because Don Pompeio had

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had prejudiced me against them. Several, however, were very much applauded, and, among these, even some who put me in mind

of the fable of the pig. Laura told me the names of all the actors and actresses as they presented themselves; and, not contented with this, the satyrical baggage described their characters nicely, as they appeared. "This here (faid she) is a " noodle. - That fellow is a brute: and that " minx whom you fee, with an air more lewd "than engaging, is called Rosarda; a very " bad acquisition for the company! she should " be enrolled in the troop that is raifing by " order of the vice-roy of New-Spain, to be " transported forthwith into America. " ferve that luminous constellation advancing: " that fair fetting fun, known by the name of "Castilda: if she had exacted a stone from " each of her lovers, as a princess of Egypt " is faid to have done heretofore, she could " have raifed a pyramid which would have " touched the third heaven." In short, Laura gave no quarter: her malicious tongue did not even spare her own mistress.

Nevertheless I will confess my weakness: I was charmed with my chamber-maid, tho' her character was not morally good. She satyrized so agreeably, that I was even in love with her malice. Between the acts she got up, to go and see if Arsenia wanted her; but instead of returning immediately to her place, she amused herself behind the scenes, in listen-

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ing to the foft things that were faid by the men who flattered her. I followed her, for once, to observe, and perceived that she had a great many acquaintances; having reckoned no less than three actors, who, one after another, ftopt to speak with her, and seemed to treat her with great familiarity. This was not at all agreeable to me, who feeling, for the first time, what it was to be jealous, returned to my feat fo penfive and melancholy, that Laura observed it as foon as she came back. " What is the matter with thee, Gil " Blas? (faid she, with surprize.) What gloo-" my dæmon has taken possession of thee " fince I went away? Thou feemest sad and " dejected." " I have too much reason to " be fo, my princefs, (answered I) you have " a little too much vivacity in your behavi-" our: I have observed you with the actors." " A pleasant cause of melancholy, indeed! " (faid she, laughing) How! does that give " thee any uneafiness? Truly thou art a meer " novice: but thou wilt fee a great many " other strange things among us, and must " accustom thyself to our easy way of life. -" Harbour no jealoufy, child; for that, among " comedians, is looked upon as ridiculous: " therefore we have none of it. Fathers, " husbands, brothers, uncles, and cousins, " with us, are the most complaifant persons " on earth, and generally make fettlements for their own family."

After having exhorted me to take umbrage at nothing, but look upon every thing with composure, she declared that I was the happy mortal who had found the way to her heart; and affured me, that her love should always rest on me alone. On this assurance, which however I might have distrusted, without the imputation of being too fufpicious, I promifed never more to be alarmed, and kept my word; for that very evening I saw her in close conversation, and heard her laugh heartily with feveral different men. When the play was over, we went home with our miftress, where Florimonda foon after arrived, with three old noblemen and an actor, to supper. Besides Laura and me, there were of fervants in the house, a cookmaid, a coachman, and a page, who all joined in preparing for supper. The cook, who was no less dextrous than Dame Jacinta, was affifted by the coachman in dreffing the victuals; while the chambermaid and page laid the cloth, and I furnished the buffet with the finest plate and several cups of gold, which were offered to the goddess of the temple. I stored it likewife with bottles of the choicest wines, serving in my own person as cup-bearer, to flew my mistress that I could turn my hand to every thing. The deportment of the actreffes, during the repaft, filled me with admiration: they assumed airs of importance, and imagined themselves women of the first rank. Far from addressing the noblemen with the title of your excellence, they

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they did not even give them that of your lordship; but called them simply by their names: true, indeed, these very noblemen had spoiled and made them so vain, by suffering them to be so familiar.—As for the actor, he, like a player, used to perform the hero, treated them without ceremony, drank to their health, and maintained (as one may say) the upper end of the table. "Upon my soul, " (said I to myself) when Laura demonstrated the equality of the marquis and player in the day-time, she might have added, that they are still more so in the night, since "they spend it thus in drinking together."

Arsenia and Florimonda being naturally wanton, a thousand hardy expressions escaped them, mingled with small favours and toyings, which were exquisitely relished by these old sinners. While my mistress amused the one with a little innocent ribaldry, her friend, sitting between the other two, did not act the Susanna with them. While I was considering this picture, which had but too many charms for a young fellow like me, the dessert was brought in: upon which I set wine and glasses on the table, and went to supper with Laura, who waited for me. "Well, Gil Blas," (said she) what is thy opinion of those noble-

"men thou hast seen?"—"They are, doubt-

" less, (answered I) adorers of Arsenia and

"Florimonda." "No, (faid she) they are

" old letchers, who visit coquets without at-

" taching themselves to them, and ask only " small

" finall compliances, paying generously for trifling favours they receive. Thank hea-

" ven! Florimonda and my mistress are at

" present without lovers: I mean such lovers

" as affume the husband, and want to engross all the pleasures of the house, because they

" fupport the expence of it. As for my own

" part, I am very glad it is fo; and maintain

" that a coquet of sense ought to fly these sorts of engagements. Why should she give up

"her liberty to a mafter? 'Tis better to ac-

" quire an equipage penny by penny, than

" have one at fuch a price."

When Laura was in a speaking humour, (which was almost always the case) words cost her nothing.—Heaven! what a volubility of tongue was fhe miftress of! She told me a thousand adventures which had happened to the actresses of the prince's company; and I concluded from her discourse, that I could not be in a better situation to become perfectly acquainted with vice. I was unhappily of an age when this does not create much horror; and besides, the chambermaid painted these irregularities so artfully, that I beheld only the delicious side of them. She had not time to relate the tenth part of the exploits of the actresses; for she had spoke but three hours, when the noblemen and player withdrew with Florimonda, whom they conducted to her own house.

After they were gone, my mistress giving me money, faid, "There, Gil Blas, are ten "pistoles

It

" piftoles to go to market to morrow morn-"ing: five or fix of our gentlemen and ladies " are to dine with me, fo that you must take " care, and have every thing in plenty." "Madam, (answered I) with this fum I'll " engage to entertain the whole troop." "Friend, (replied Arsenia) be so good as to " correct your expressions: you must not call "them the troop, but the company. We " fay a troop of thieves, a troop of beggars, " and a troop of authors; but learn to fay a "company of comedians. The corps of ac-" tors in Madrid especially, deserve to be " called a company." I asked pardon for having used such a difrespectful term, and most humbly begged she would excuse my ignorance; protesting that, for the future, whenfoever I should mention the gentlemen actors of Madrid in a collective manner, I would always call them the company.

CHAP. XI.

How the players lived together; and their treatment of authors.

Went to market next morning, in order to begin my office of butler; and as it was a meagre-day, bought, by order of my mistress, some good fat pullets, rabbits, partridges, and other wild fowl; for as the gentlemen-players were not altogether satisfied with the behaviour of the church towards them, they did not think proper to adhere scrupulously to its com-

commandments.-I brought home more victuals than would have sufficed twelve honest gentlemen, during three days in carnivaltime; fo that the cook had work enough for the whole morning. While she prepared the dinner, Arsenia got up, and remained at her toilet till noon, when Signiors Rofimiro and Ricardo (two actors) arrived: Constantia and Celinaura (two actresses) came soon after: and at last Florimonda appeared, accompanied by a man who had all the appearance of a finished coxcomb. His hair was tied behind in a very foppish manner, his hat adorned with a plume of green feathers, his breeches smooth and strait, and his shirt, which was very fine, was bordered with an handsome lace, display'd at the slashes of his doublet. His gloves and handkerchief were contained within the hilt of his fword, and he wore his cloak with a grace altogether peculiar.

Tho' he had a good mein, and was very well made, I no fooner faw him than remarking in him fomething fingular, I faid to myfelf, "This gentleman must certainly be an origi"nal." I was not mistaken; for he was a man of a very extraordinary character. As foon as he entered Arsenia's apartment, he ran with open arms, and embraced the actresses and actors, one after another, with gestures still more extravagant than those of the beaus. My opinion was not changed when I heard him speak; for he made affected pauses, and pronounced his words with great emphasis, ac-

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commodating his looks and gestures to the fubject. Having ask'd Laura who that gentleman was, "I don't wonder (faid she) at thy " curiofity: it is impossible to see and hear " Signior Carlos Alonso de la Ventoleria, "even for once, without feeling the same " emotion. I will describe him to the life. "In the first place, he has been a player; but " quitted the stage thro' whim, and now re-" pents in earnest. His black hair, which "thou feeft, is dyed as well as his eye-brows " and whiskers; for he is older than Saturn: " but as his parents, when he was born, neg-" lected to have his name inferted in the pa-" rish register, he takes the advantage of their " omission, and calls himself younger than he " is by twenty good years at leaft. He is, " moreover, the most self-conceited man in "Spain, tho' he spent the first sixty years of " his life in the groffest ignorance; but in or-" der to become learned, he employed a pre-" ceptor, who has taught him to spell in La-"tin and Greek. Besides, he has got an in-"finite number of good stories by heart, " which he has repeated and vouched fo often, " that at length he actually believes them to " be true. These he brings into conversa-"tion, and one may fay, that his wit shines " at the expence of his memory. He has the " character of being a great actor, and I pi-" oully believe it; but nevertheless I will own " that he does not please me. I hear him re-" peat fometimes in company, and, among other faults, think his pronunciation too " much

" much affected, and his voice so quav'ring, " that it gives an antic and ridiculous air to

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" his declamation."

Such was the picture that my fweet-heart drew of this honorary stage-player, who was really in his deportment the most haughty mortal I had ever feen. He played the orator too, and did not fail to produce from his budget two or three stories, which he uttered with a ftudied air of solemnity. On the other hand, the actreffes and actors, who did not come there to hold their tongues, were not filent; but began to talk of their absent comrades, not in a very charitable manner indeed: but this must be pardoned in players as well as in authors. The conversation, therefore, kindling against their neighbours: "You can-" not guess, ladies, (said Rosimiro) a new " piece of finesse of our dear confederate Ce-" farino. He this morning purchased silk "flockings, ribbons and lace, which he or-" dered a page to bring to the rehearfal, as if " fent by a certain countefs." " Such a piece " of knavery! (said Signior de Ventoleria, "with a filly, vain fimper) there was no fuch " deceit in my time: we never dreamt of " composing fuch stories: the ladies of qua-" lity, indeed, spared us the invention by " making the purchase themselves: it was "their fancy." "Zooks! (faid Ricardo) they " have that fancy still; and was I permitted " to explain myself - but one must be silent " on these fort of adventures, especially when " persons of a certain rank are concerned." " Gentle-

"Gentlemen, (said Florimonda, interrupt-" ing him) truce with your intrigues, if you " please, they are very well known to all the " world, and let us talk of Imenia. They " fay that nobleman, who has fpent fo much "money upon her, has left her at last." "Yes, truly, (cried Constantia) and I'll tell "you more; she has lost a little citizen, "whom she certainly would have ruined. I "know the foundation of the whole affair: " her Mercury committed a terrible blunder, " by carrying to the nobleman a letter she " had wrote to the citizen, and giving this last " the billet intended for the lord." " are great losses, my dear, (replied Flori-"monda)." "O! as for the nobleman, (faid " Constantia) there is no great matter, he had " fpent almost his whole estate: but the citi" zen had just began his career, and had ne-" ver passed through good hands; which is a " thousand pities."

In this manner they discoursed before dinner, and their conversation turned on the same subjects while they were at table. But as I should never have done, if I undertook to repeat all the expressions sull of malice and solly, which I heard, I hope the reader will excuse me for suppressing them, in order to describe the reception of a poor devil of an author, who came in towards the end of the

repast.

Our page came, and faid aloud to his mistress, "Madam, a man in marvellous foul "linen, bedaggled all over, and who, so "please

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"please you, looks very much like a poet, "wants to speak with you." "Shew him "up, (answered Arsenia;) don't stir, gentle-" men, 'tis but an author." Sure enough it was one whose tragedy had been received, and who brought a part for my mistress. He was called Pedro de Moya, and, as he entered, made five or fix profound bows to the company, who neither got up nor returned his compliment. Arfenia only answered his profusion of civility by a flight inclination of her head. He advanced into the room, trembling and confused, and let his gloves and cloak fall; which having taken up, he approached my mistress, and presented to her a paper, with more respect than that of a counsellor, when he delivers a petition to a judge; faying, "Be fo " good, Madam, as to accept of this part, "which I take the liberty to offer." She received it, in a cold and disdainful manner, without even deigning to answer his compliment.

This, however, did not discourage our author, who making use of the opportunity to distribute the different parts of his play, gave one to Rosimiro, and another to Florimonda, who did not treat him a whit more courte-ously than Arsenia had done. On the contrary, the player, naturally very obliging, as these gentlemen commonly are, insulted him with the most cutting raillery, which Pedro de Moya felt, but durst not retort, lest his piece should suffer for his imprudence. He retired, therefore, without speaking, but sensibly

fibly touched, as I perceived, with his reception; and I believe that, in the bitterness of his refentment, he did not fail to curse within himself, the players, as they deserved; and they, when he was gone, began to speak of authors with great respect. "Signior Pedro " de Moya (said Florimonda) did not seem to

" go away well fatisfied."

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"Pshaw, Madam, (cried Rosimiro) don't " difturb yourself about that: authors are not " worth notice; if we should treat them on " an equal footing, it would spoil them. I "know these forry gentlemen; they would " foon forget themselves. Let us therefore "use them like flaves; and we need not fear "that we shall tire their patience: for though " their displeasure may detach them from us " fometimes, the fury of writing will bring "them back, and they will think themselves " very happy, provided we deign to act their "performances." "You are in the right, " (said Arsenia) we only lose those authors " whose fortunes we have made: for as soon as "we have procured a good fettlement for "them, idleness takes possession of them, and "they work no more. Luckily the company "don't break their hearts, and the public is " no loser by their sloth."

These fine observations were much applauded, and it was determined, that authors, notwithstanding the ill treatment they receive, owed their all to the players, who therefore claimed the fuperiority over them; and certes

they could not despise them more.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIL

Gil Blas acquires the theatrical tafte, abandons bimself to the pleasures of a comic life, with which, however, he is disgusted in a little time.

THE company remained at table until the hour arrived of going to the theatre, whither they repaired in a body. I followed, and once more faw the play, which gave me fuch pleafure, that I refolved to take the fame opportunity every day. In this I did not fail, and infensibly became reconciled to the actors; fuch is the force of custom: I was particularly charmed with those who ranted and distorted themselves most upon the stage; and was not

at all fingular in this way of thinking.

The beauty of the performance touched me no less than the manner of representation: I was quite transported with some of them; and among the rest, was prodigiously fond of those where all the cardinals or the twelve peers of France appeared. I remember that in two days, I got by heart, a whole comedy entitled, the Queen of Flowers. The Rose, who was queen, had the Violet for a confidante, and the Jessamin for her usher. I thought nothing could be more ingenious than these works, which I imagined did a great deal of honour to the taste of our nation.

I not only adorned my memory with the brightest passages from these dramatic masterpieces; I fet about bringing my taste to per-

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fection; which to accomplish, I listened with a greedy attention to all that the players faid. If they praised any performance, I esteemed it: and whatfoever met with their disapprobation, was immediately despised by me. I thought they were as skilful in plays, as jewellers are in diamonds. Nevertheless, Pedro de Moya's tragedy had great fuccess, although they had prognosticated its damnation. But even this could not make me fuspect their judgment; and I chose rather to believe that the public wanted common fense, than to doubt of the company's infallibility. I was affured, however, from all quarters, that those new pieces of which the players had no good opinion, were usually very much applauded; and that on the contrary, those which they received with approbation, were commonly hissed by the audience. I was told that it was a maxim with them to judge erroneously of the works that were presented to them; and was informed of a thousand instances where the fuccess belied their determination; but all these proofs were scarce sufficient to disabuse my understanding.

I shall never forget what happened one day, in the first representation of a new comedy, which the players had pronounced cold and tedious, and actually thought unpassable. In these sentiments they performed the first act, that met with great applause, which quite astonished them. The second act was played, and still better received than the first: upon which the actors were consounded. "How

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"the devil! (said Rosimiro) is it possible that "this comedy should take?" At last they acted the third, which gave more pleasure than the two former. "I can't comprehend the "meaning of this! (said Ricardo) We ima-"gined that this piece would not please—yet every body is charmed with it!" "Gentle-"men, (said one of them very plainly) the "reason is, because there are a thousand frokes of wit in the performance, which "we have not observed."

I no longer, therefore, looked upon the players, as excellent judges, but became a just appraiser of their merit: and, indeed, they jusrified to a tittle, all the ridicule they met with from the world: for some of the actors and actreffes were giddy with applause: and considering themselves as objects of admiration, thought they bestowed a favour on the public, when they deigned to play. I was shocked at their faults, but unhappily too well pleafed with their way or life; so that I plung'd into debauchery. How could it be otherwise? Their conversation was pernicious to youth, and all I faw contributed to corrupt my morals: had I been ignorant of what paffed at the houses of Casilda, Constantia, and the other players, that of Arsenia alone was but too capable of undoing me: for belides the old noblemen I mentioned, there came thither, beaus, young heirs whom usurers enabled to spend money, and sometimes also, farmers of the revenue were admitted, who far from being gratified for their presence, as they

they are in their own affemblies, were obliged to pay through the nose for their reception.

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Florimonda, who lived hard by, dined and supped every day with my mistres; and people were surprised at the friendship that seemed to unite them. It afforded matter of astonishment to see coquets live together in such good intelligence; and every body imagined that soon or late, they would quarrel about some gallant. But the world was very much mistaken in these perfect friends, who were joined by the most solid affection. Instead of being jealous of one another, like other women, they lived in common; and chose rather to share the spoils, than soolishly dispute about the inclinations of the men.

Laura, by the example of these illustrious affociates, made the best of her youth too: and it was not without reason she had told me that I should see strange things: however, I affected to be quite easy; because I had promised to adopt the unconcern of a player on fuch occasions; and thus I diffembled for some days, contenting myself with asking the names of the men with whom I found her particularly engaged. She always answered, that it was an uncle or coufin. Heavens, what a crowd of relations she had! Sure, her family was more numerous than that of king Priam: and the jade did not even confine herself to her uncles and cousins; but also went abroad frequently in order to allure strangers, by acting the widow of quality at the house of the old woman whom I mentioned before. In short,

Laura

giz The ADVENTURES of

Laura, (to give the reader a just and precise idea of her) was as young, as handsome, and as much a coquet as her mistress, who had no other advantage over her, than that of diverting the town in public. I was borne down by the torrent for three weeks, during which, I gave myself up to all manner of debauchery: but at the same time, I must observe, in the midst of my pleasures, I was frequently seized with fentiments of remorfe that proceeded from my education, and embittered all my enjoyments. Vice could not get the better of these warnings, which augmented in proportion as I became more debauched; and by the effect of a happy disposition, I began to abhor the disorders of a theatrical life. "Ah, wretch! (faid I to myfelf) is it thus thou fulfillest the expectation of thy family? Was it not enough to cheat it by chusing another employment than that of a tutor? Does thy fervile condition hinder thee from living like an honest man? or does it become thee to live among fuch finners? fome of whom are possessed by envy, rage, and avarice; whilft others have banished all sense of shame. These are abandoned to intemperance and floth; and those indulge their pride even to an excess of infolence. I am resolved: and will no longer dwell with the feven deadly fins."

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.



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